

Story by NISIOISIN  
Retold by Mitsuru Hattori

# Imperfect Girl

1



# Imperfect Girl



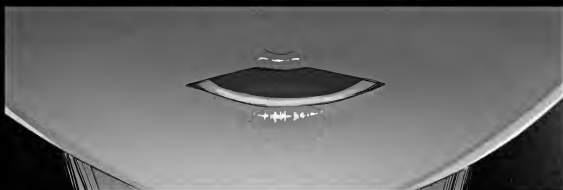
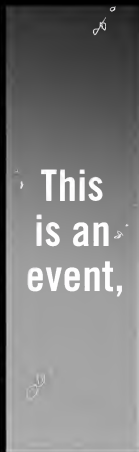
Story by  
**NISIOISIN**

Retold by  
**Mitsuru Hattori**

Original Character  
Concept:  
**Foo Midori**

# 1

**This is  
not a  
tale.**



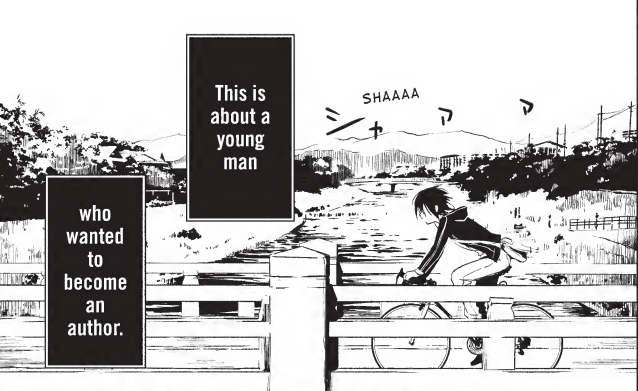




I'll be  
leaving  
now.

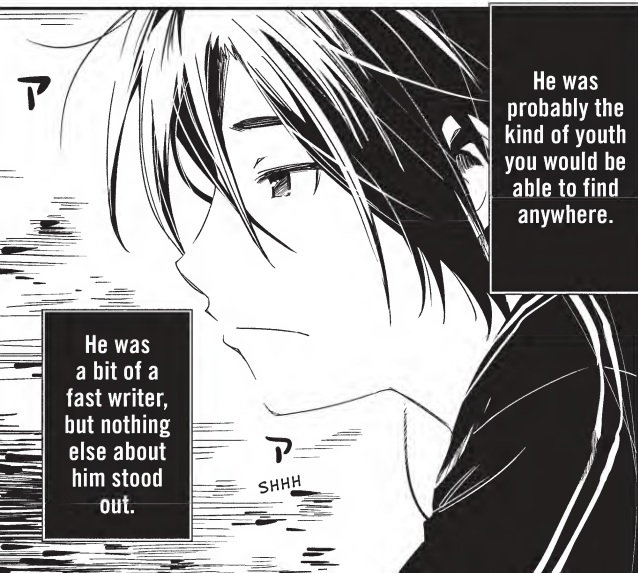






This is  
about a  
young  
man

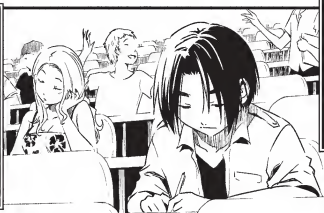
who  
wanted  
to  
become  
an  
author.



He was  
probably the  
kind of youth  
you would be  
able to find  
anywhere.

He was  
a bit of a  
fast writer,  
but nothing  
else about  
him stood  
out.

and his  
greatest  
talents were  
writing reports  
and taking  
essay tests.

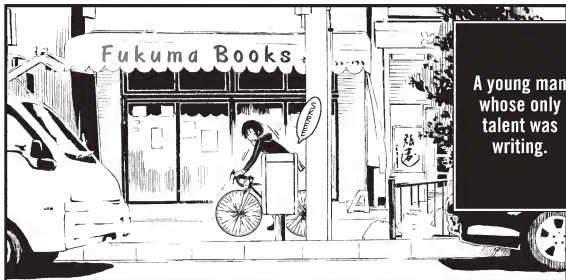
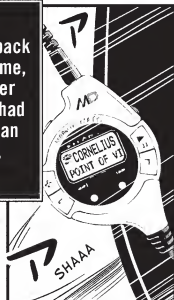


He was a  
college  
student at  
the time,

whether in  
a language  
arts class or  
anything else,  
he was always  
the first to  
finish.



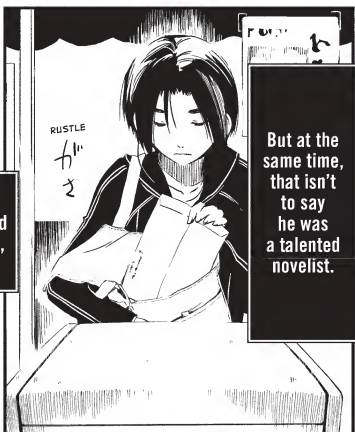
Thinking back  
on that time,  
no matter  
when he had  
to write an  
essay,



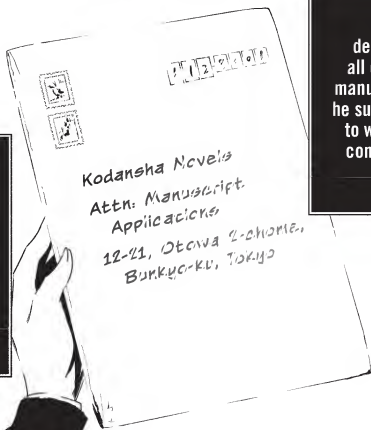
A young man  
whose only  
talent was  
writing.



And  
so,



But at the  
same time,  
that isn't  
to say  
he was  
a talented  
novelist.

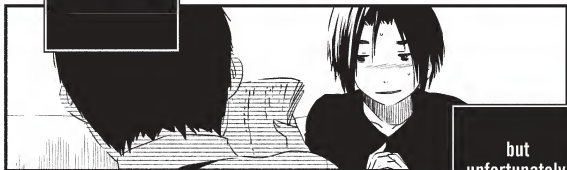


he never  
once received  
an encouraging  
reply.

despite  
all of the  
manuscripts  
he submitted  
to writing  
contests,



He had  
already met  
with editors  
from multiple  
companies at  
that point,



but  
unfortunately,  
those  
meetings  
never bore  
fruit.



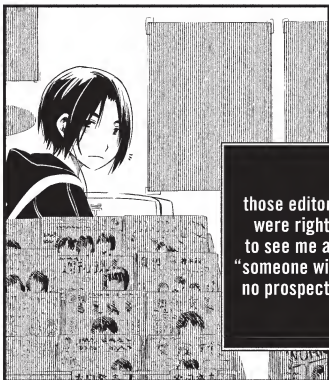
Maybe if  
he'd had  
better  
people  
skills,



he wouldn't  
have let  
those golden  
opportunities  
pass him by,  
but...



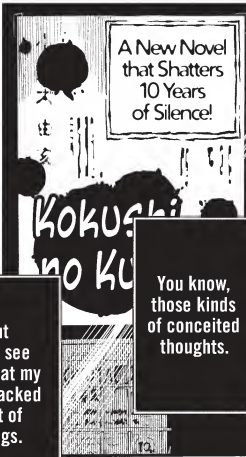




those editors  
were right  
to see me as  
"someone with  
no prospects."



But  
I can see  
now that my  
work lacked  
a lot of  
things.



You know,  
those kinds  
of conceited  
thoughts.



At the time,  
of course, I  
wondered why  
they didn't  
understand  
just how  
entertaining  
my work  
was.



They  
weren't  
novels  
by an  
author.

They were  
novels by  
an *aspiring*  
author.



Even  
if I could  
somehow  
close my  
eyes and  
ignore  
that fact,

for some  
reason,  
at the  
end of  
the day,

I think those  
(attempts at)  
novels just  
didn't have  
any sparkle.



The way  
I see it,  
that's what  
separates  
the two.

a  
creator  
of  
tales.

Okay  
then, you  
might ask  
me, what's  
the difference  
between an  
author and  
an aspiring  
author? Well,  
an author is

and  
nothing  
more.

LIES

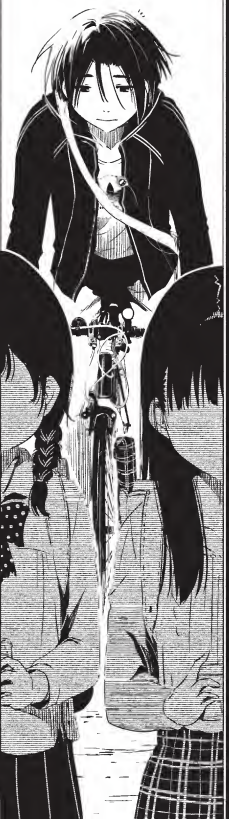
An  
author  
creates  
tales.  
But an  
aspiring  
author

Just a  
yarn-  
spinning  
blowhard.



At the  
time,  
I was just  
a liar.

Which is why I think



were it not for that event taking place,



I honestly never would have amounted to anything.

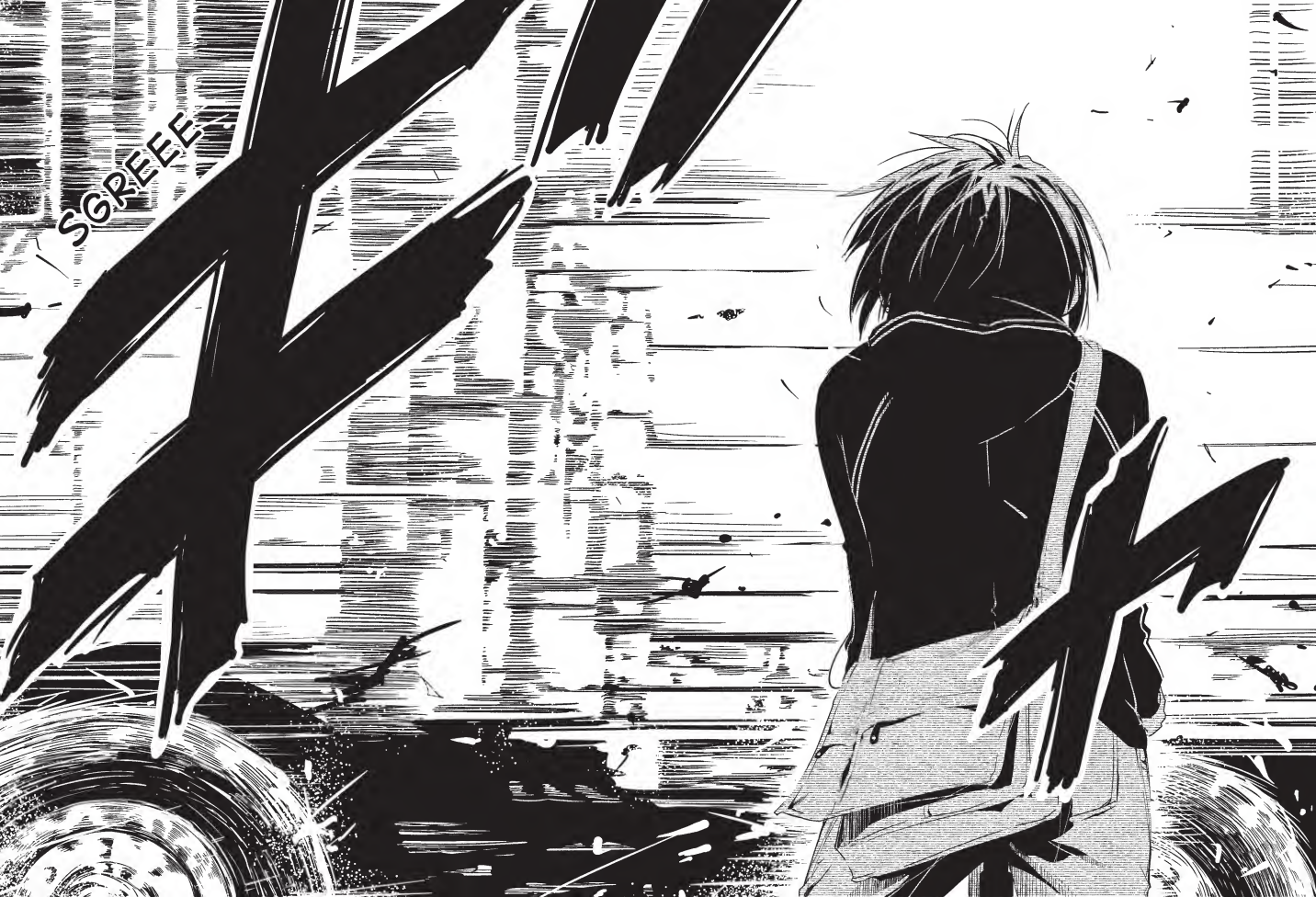
And that's why



I think I need to thank her.



That child, that girl.









Both  
of  
them

were  
struck

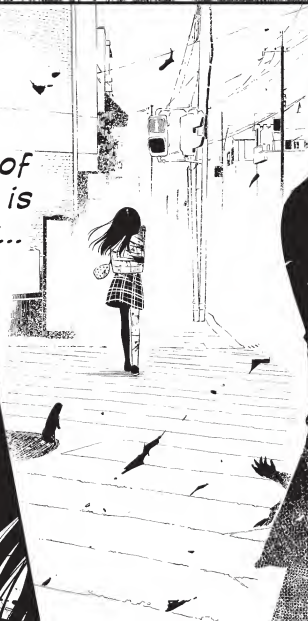
OOO

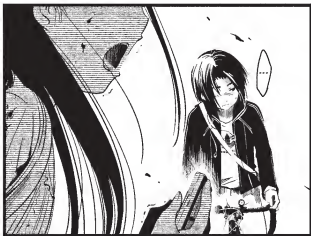
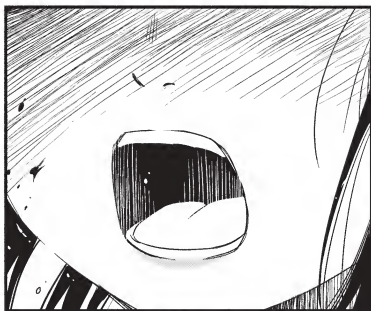


One of  
them is  
okay...



One of  
them...









What

...?

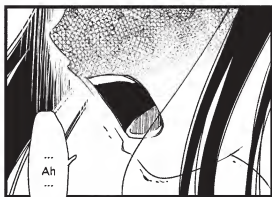
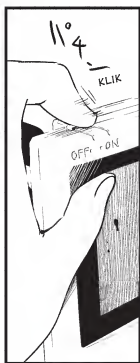
BADUMM

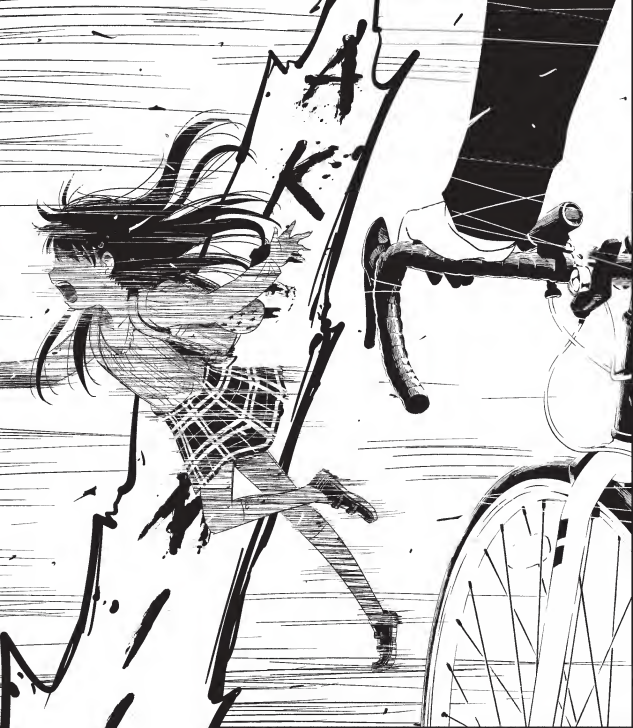
Wh...

Why

...?









ア

ア

ハ

...I  
saw  
it...

That  
girl  
...

ハ





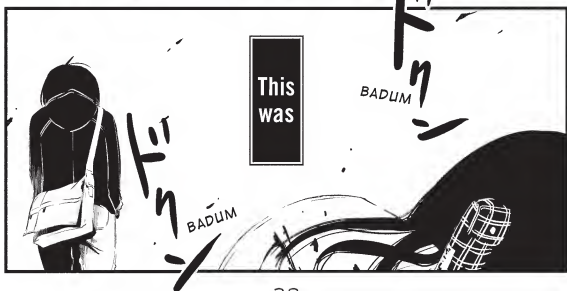
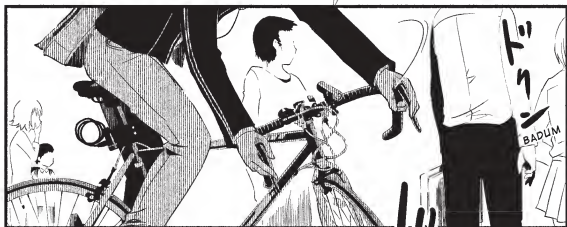
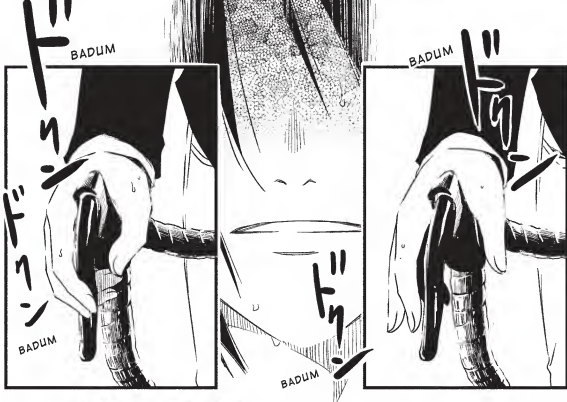
made  
sure  
to  
save  
first

and  
then  
ran  
to her  
friend  
!!!!



She  
took the  
game  
she was  
playing...





ド  
ン  
BADUM

the  
first  
time



ド  
ン  
BADUM

U  
and I  
met.







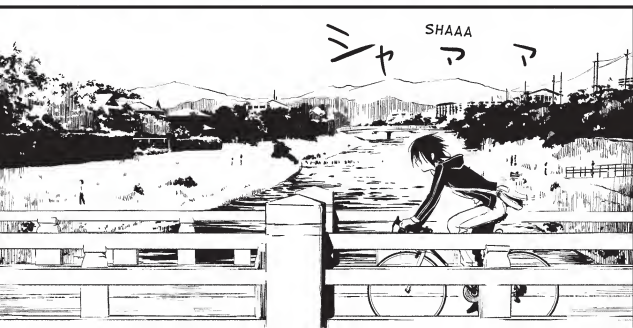
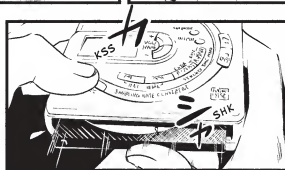




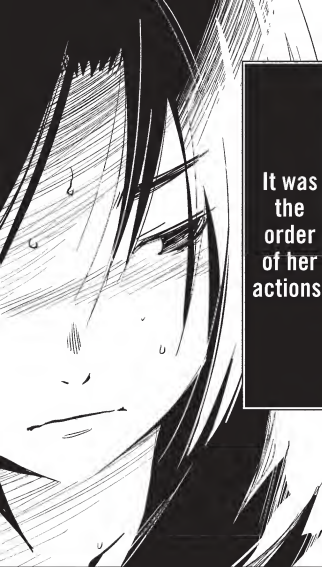




has it  
been  
now...?







It was  
the  
order  
of her  
actions.

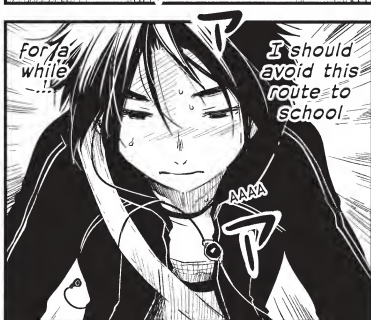
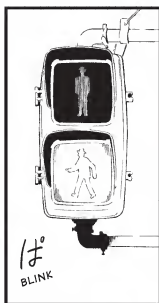
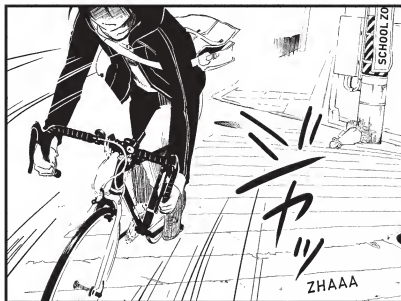
SHIVER



before  
running  
to her  
friend.

she  
shouldn't  
have  
saved her  
game

Just like how  
you'd never  
put on your  
shoes before  
trying to  
put on your  
socks,

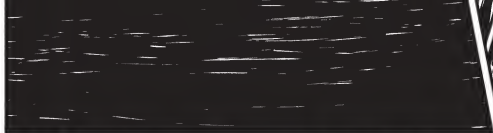






SLAM!

Huh?  
?



WHUMP

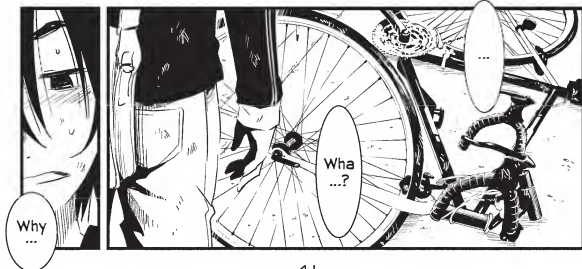
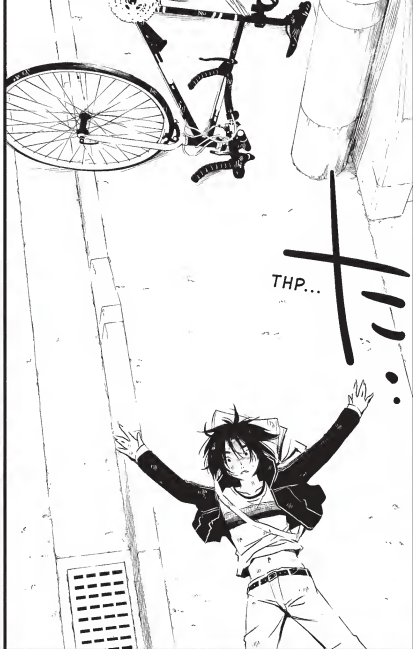
Huh?

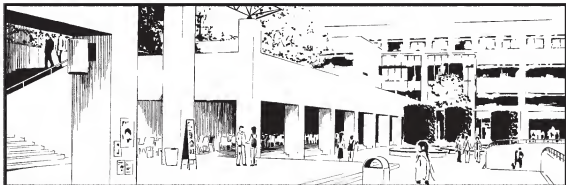
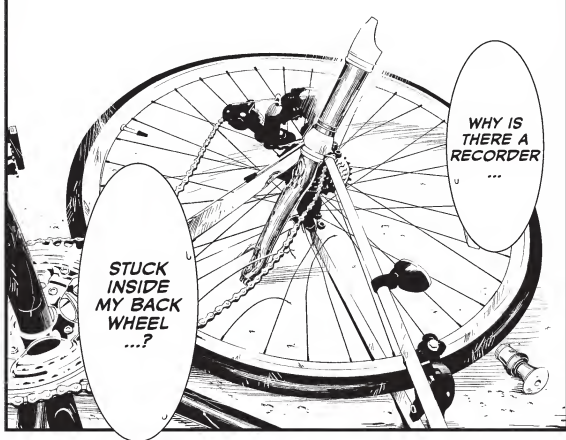
What...

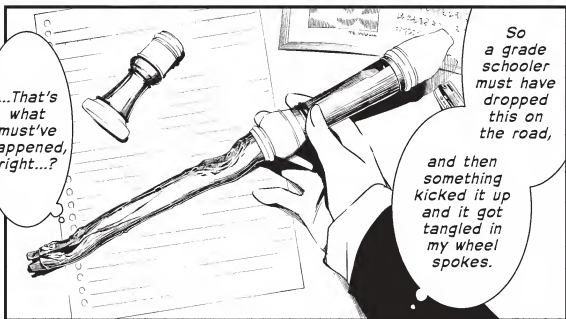
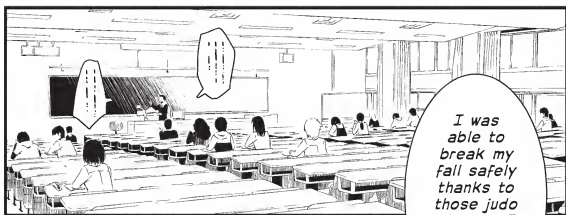
just  
happened  
...?

GASP

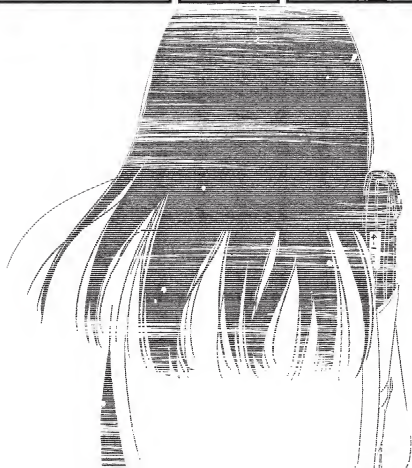
GASP













I might not go so far as to call what I had a "bad feeling."

it was enough foreshadowing that looking back later, I can say, "I knew it."

But at the very least,





That  
anxiety  
continued  
to grow  
inside  
of me,

が  
や  
CHATTER

and I  
began to  
feel more  
and more  
unstable.

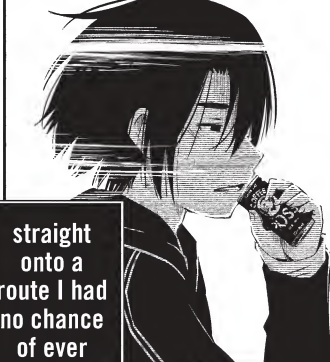


It was  
as if I was  
making some  
kind of huge  
mistake.

If I  
were to  
compare  
it to  
something,  
it was like  
an RPG,

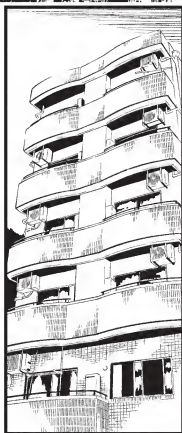


が  
や  
RATTLE  
が  
や  
RATTLE  
が  
や  
RATTLE



straight  
onto a  
route I had  
no chance  
of ever  
overcoming  
...

where  
I had  
wandered  
off in the  
wrong  
direction





All right.  
Thank you.

Three hours from now?  
Uhm...  
Yes, that's fine.

...  
Yes.

Apartment 601.



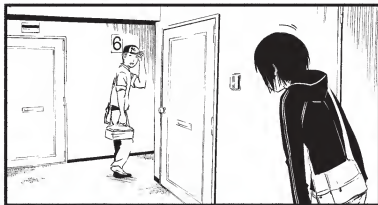
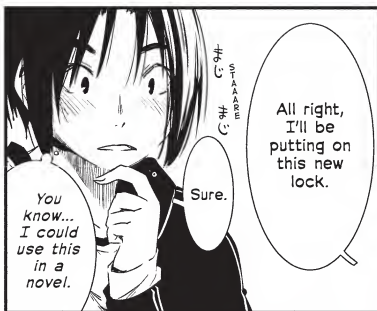
But oh well  
...

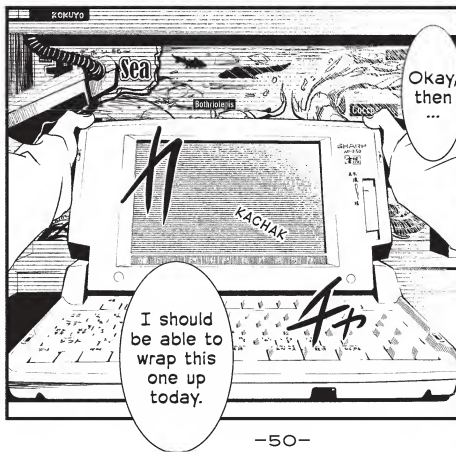


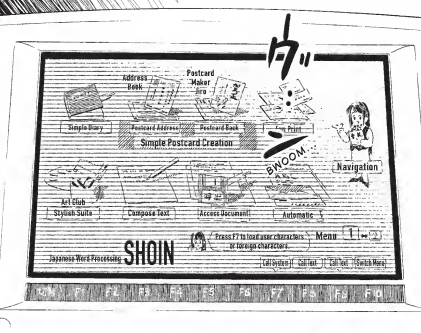
I wanted to get home early so I could write more of that novel...

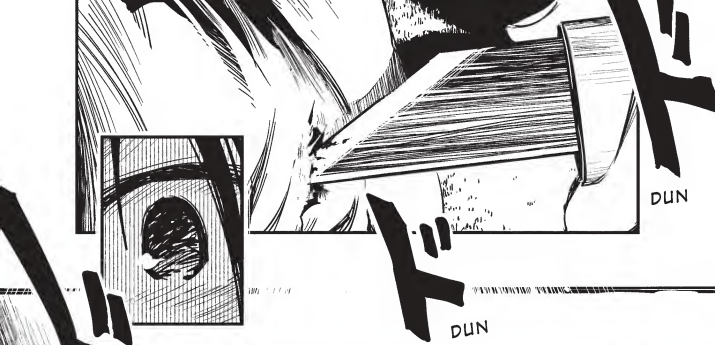


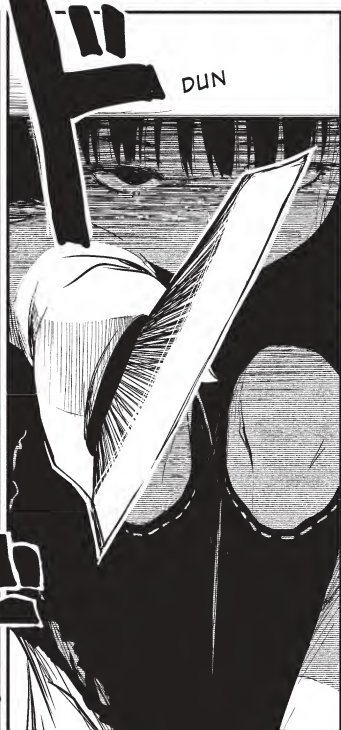
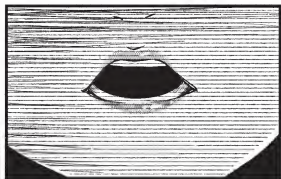




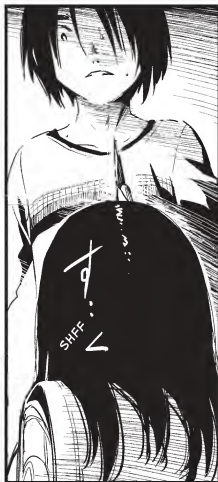
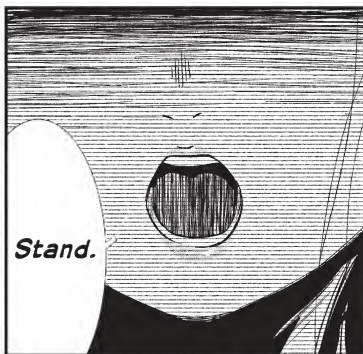












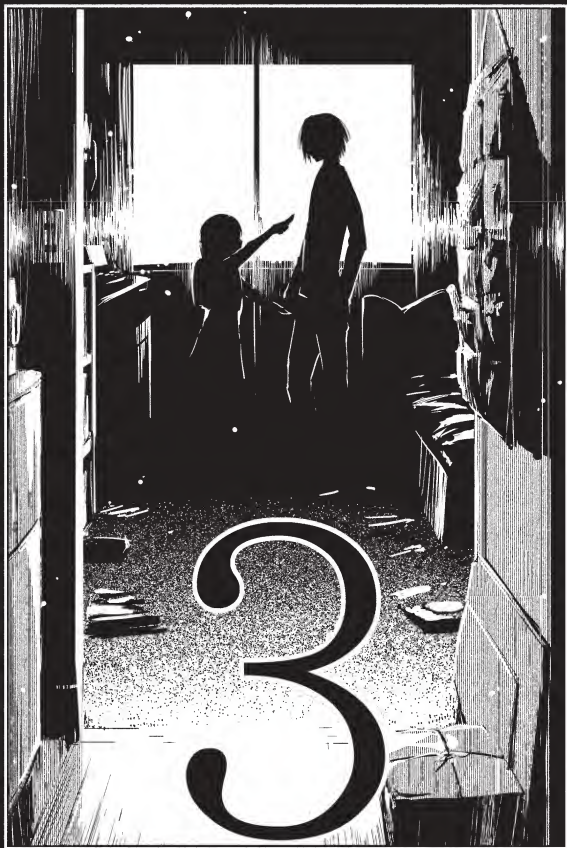


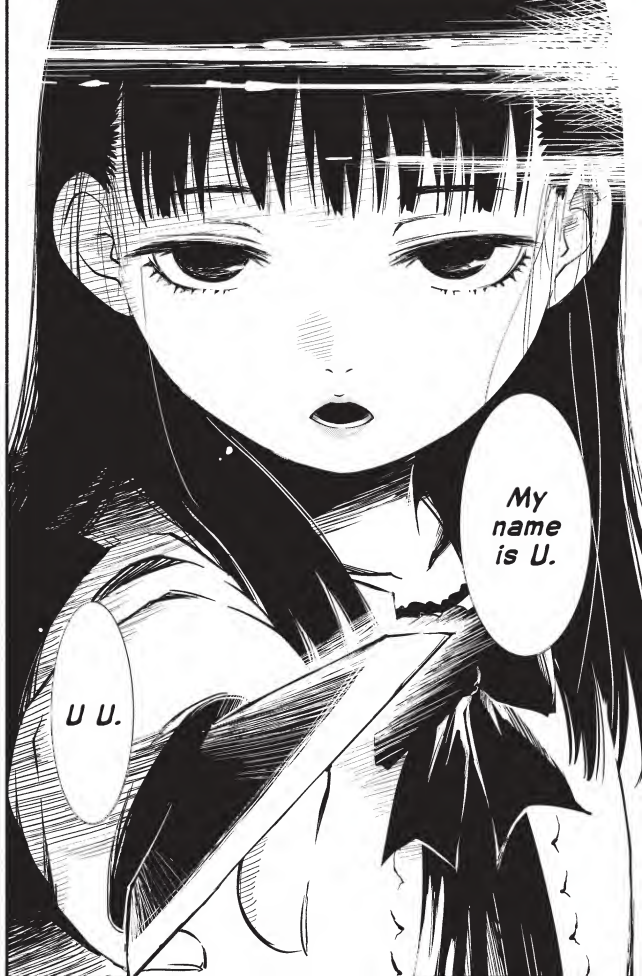


*U U.*



*My  
name  
is U.*





*My  
name  
is U.*

*U U.*

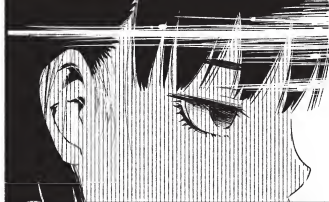


Her name wasn't really a pair of alphabet letters, of course.  
She gave me her regular Japanese name, but since this is an event and an incident, not a tale, I can't make that public here.

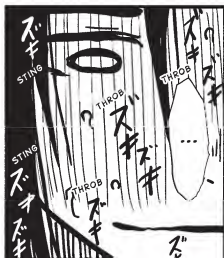








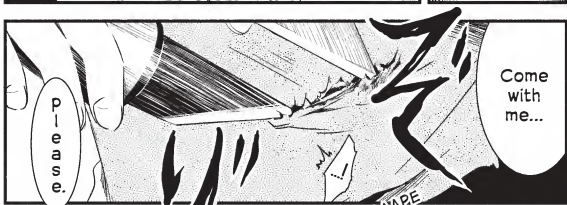
Turn  
around.



SCREAM like a novel protagonist  
 fair FIGHT BACK  
 pretend nothing is happening ACT TOUGH  
 sadist CALCULATED  
 COOL STEAL THE KNIFE  
 Masochist JUDGEMENT FEAR  
 FIGHTING A CHILD death IDIOT  
 PAIN KICK  
 FOR SHOW girl  
 SELF-DEFENSE  
 GUILT BLEEDING  
 BLADE



STAY  
COMPOSED





She's  
doing  
things  
out of  
order.



...  
me.

If you  
have...  
some  
kind of  
reason,  
then...

I see.  
But... why  
do I need  
to go with  
you...?

...  
Oh.



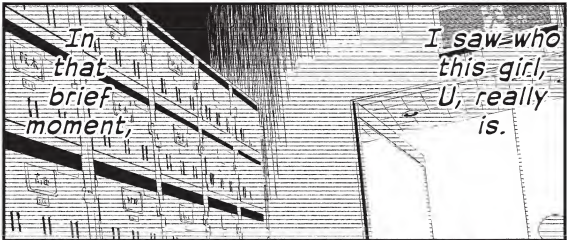
*You  
saw  
me  
and  
so  
I'm  
taking  
you.*

*Be-  
cause  
you  
saw  
me.*



then yes,  
I did  
indeed  
see her.

If she  
puts  
it like  
that,

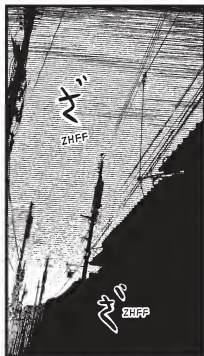


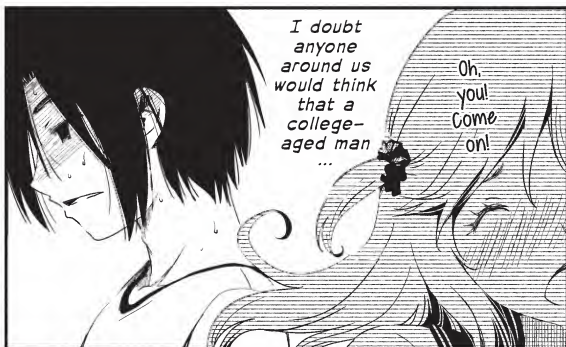
In  
that  
brief  
moment,

I saw who  
this girl,  
U, really  
is.



I saw  
right  
through  
her...





*I doubt  
anyone  
around us  
would think  
that a  
college-  
aged man  
...*

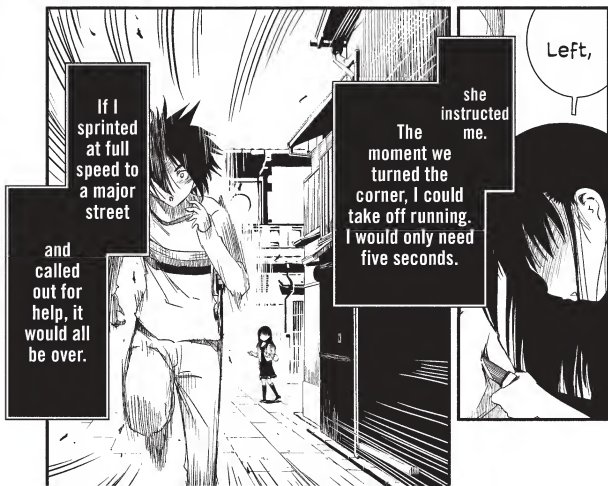
*Oh,  
you!  
Come  
on!*

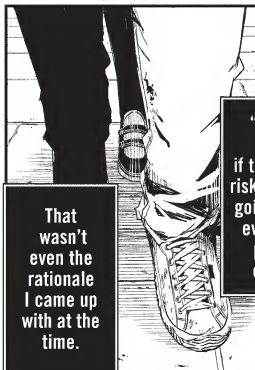


*is  
being  
abducted  
by a  
grade-  
school  
girl right  
now...*

*Ah  
ha  
ha!*

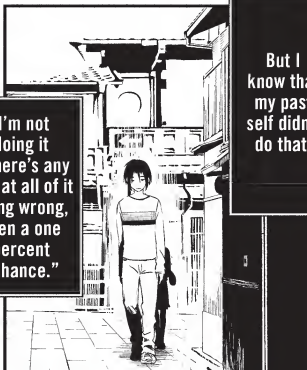






That  
wasn't  
even the  
rationale  
I came up  
with at the  
time.

"I'm not  
doing it  
if there's any  
risk at all of it  
going wrong,  
even a one  
percent  
chance."



But I  
know that  
my past  
self didn't  
do that.



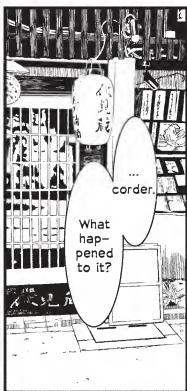
was  
that I  
couldn't  
think of  
anything  
to do.

All that  
happened



that  
was just  
the sort of  
person I  
was back  
then.

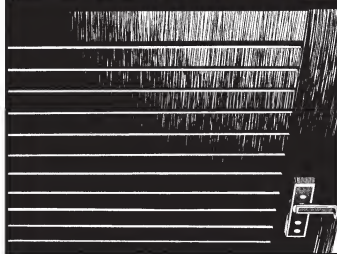
No  
matter  
how  
calm I  
pretend  
to be,  
no matter  
what slick  
excuse I  
say,



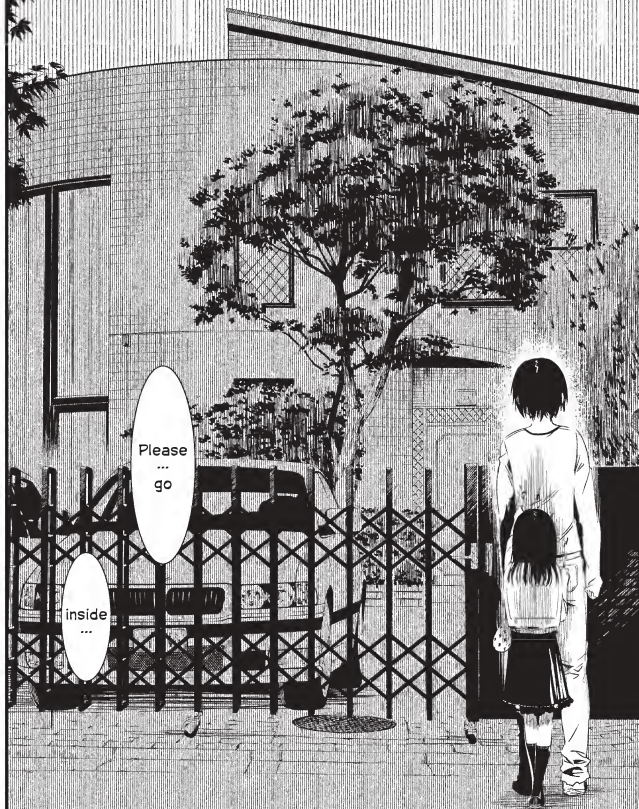




We're  
...  
here.

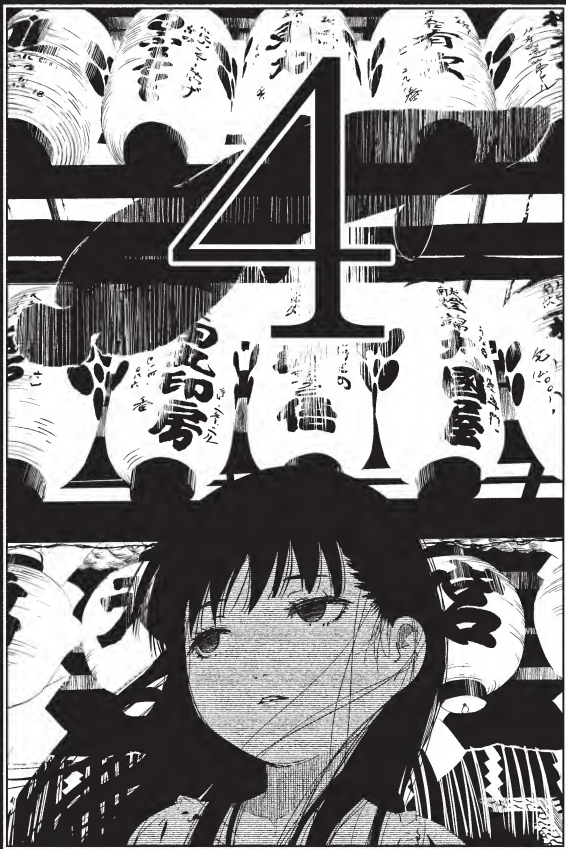




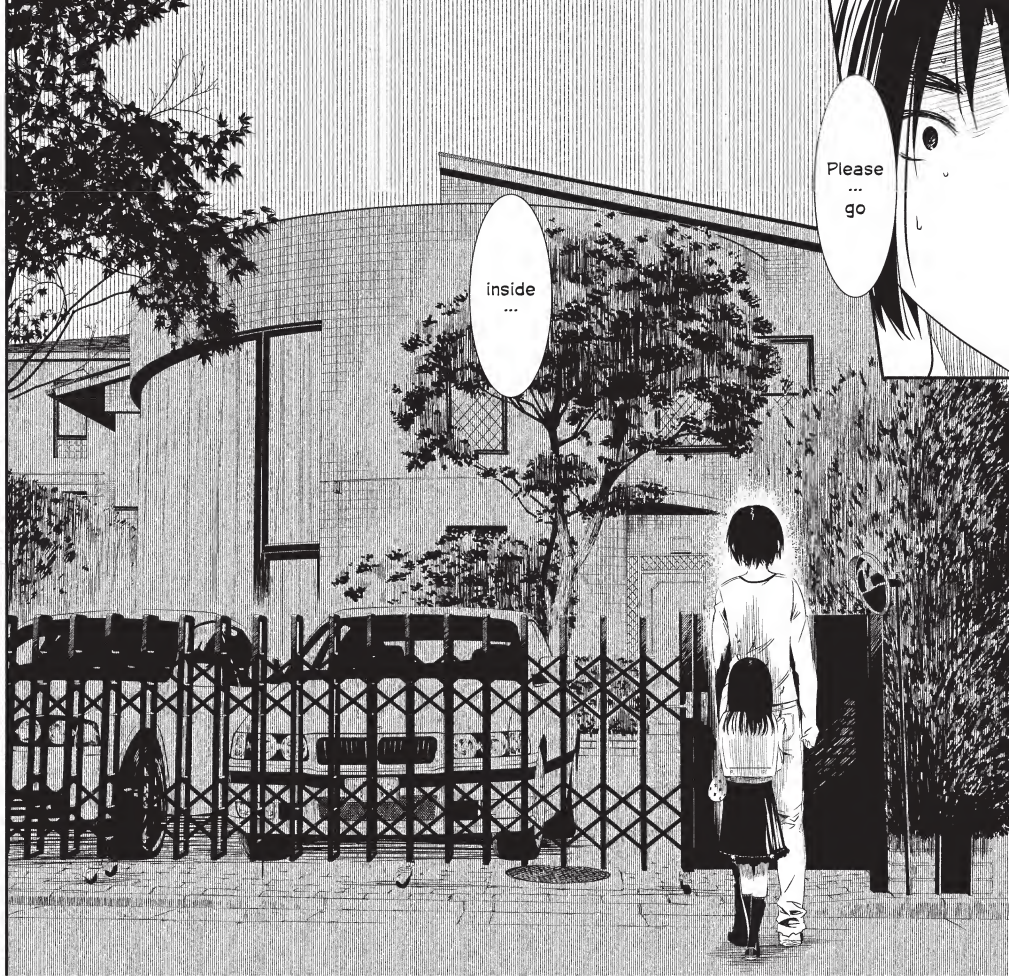


Please  
...  
go

inside  
...











しゅっ  
SWOOP



Please,  
go  
inside.



虚

Off-  
guard

Off-guard

虚

DUN



逃げ……る？

DUN

虚  
Off-guard

Do  
I  
run?

解放？

Am I free?

No  
risk?

ノー  
リス  
ク？

罠

Is  
it a  
trap

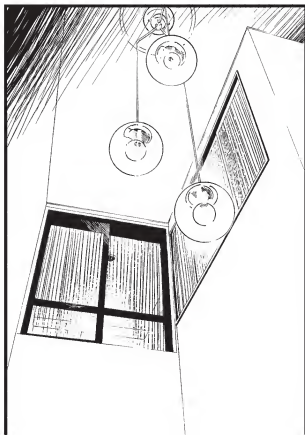
？

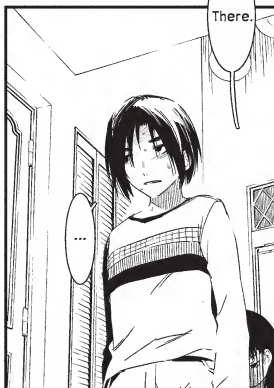
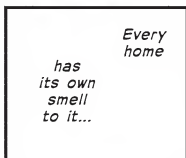
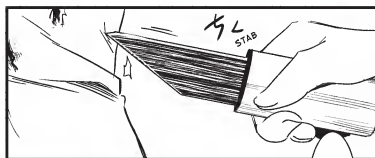
Intentional  
意図

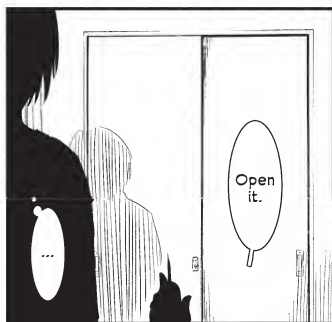
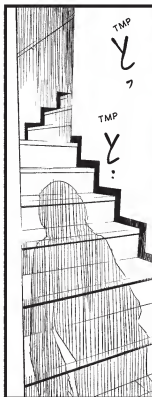
虚

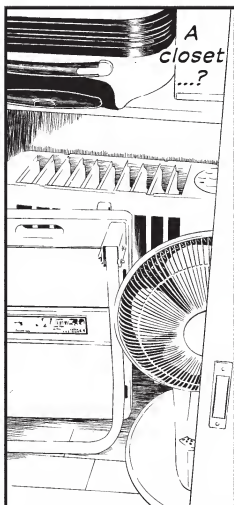
Off-  
guard...













Huh  
...?

1107...  
BTAMM



Hold  
on...

GACHAK

A lock?  
A key?

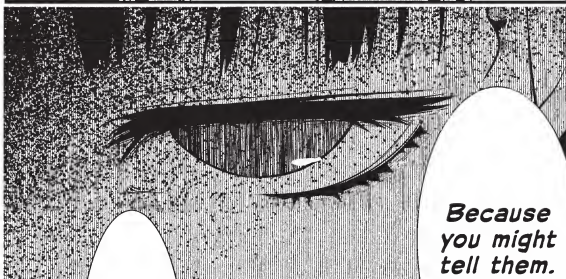
Gachak  
?





*So I  
have  
to do  
this.*

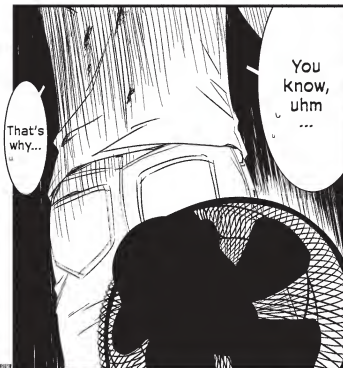
*I  
have  
to  
lock  
you  
away  
and  
take  
you  
in.*



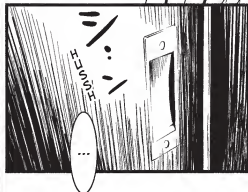








*She has me imprisoned... Why am I apologizing to her...?*

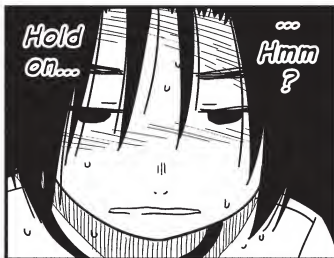




I  
forgive  
you.



...All  
right.



Hold  
On...

...  
Hmm  
?



Whew...



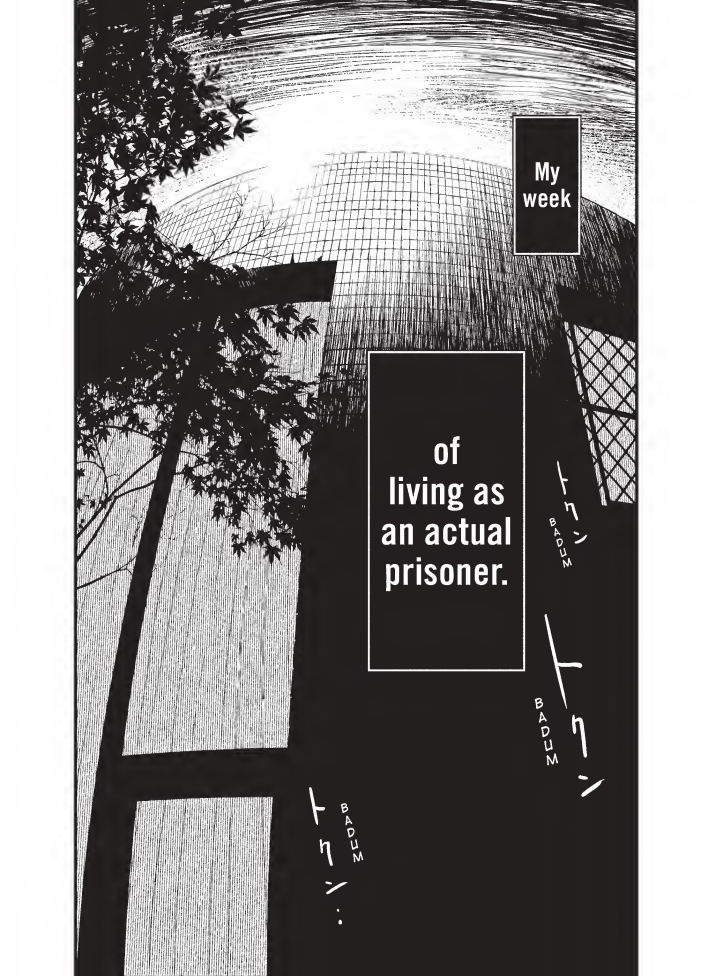
how  
it  
began  
...



U...

And  
that's





My  
week

of  
living as  
an actual  
prisoner.

h  
h  
BADDUM

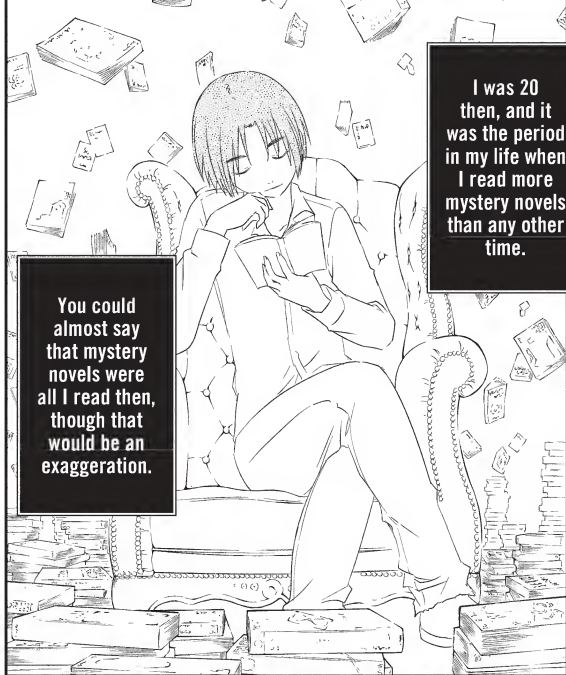
h  
h  
BADDUM

h  
h  
BADDUM



2013.8





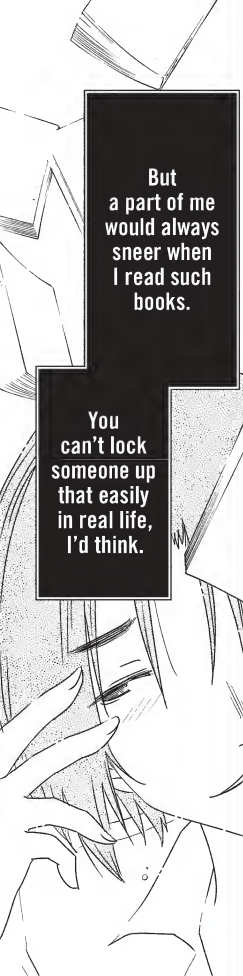
You could almost say that mystery novels were all I read then, though that would be an exaggeration.

I was 20 then, and it was the period in my life when I read more mystery novels than any other time.

I read so voraciously, that sadly, I barely remember any of the content of those books at all...

I read more foreign mystery novels than Japanese ones.

I was at an age when I wanted to show off; not necessarily to others, but to myself.



But  
a part of me  
would always  
sneer when  
I read such  
books.

You  
can't lock  
someone up  
that easily  
in real life,  
I'd think.

Unlike  
more direct  
methods,  
such as  
beating  
someone or  
poisoning  
them, it  
requires no  
physical  
strength,

And it's also  
a method that  
leaves the  
killer with a  
lesser sense  
of guilt... at  
least, I think  
that's how I  
recall it being  
described.

imprisoning  
the victim  
in a locked  
room—a safe,  
for example—  
until they  
suffocated.

there's an  
oft-seen  
method of  
murder in  
the world of  
mystery  
novels:

In  
any  
case,







And  
now

# 監禁

Hour 1

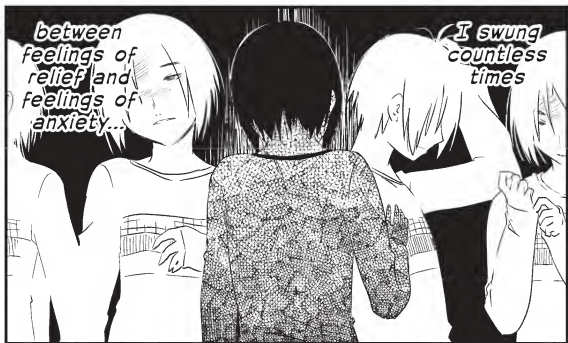
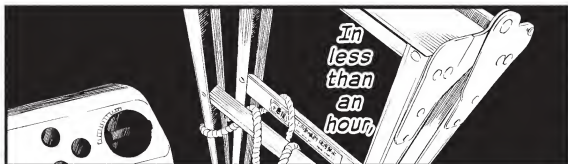
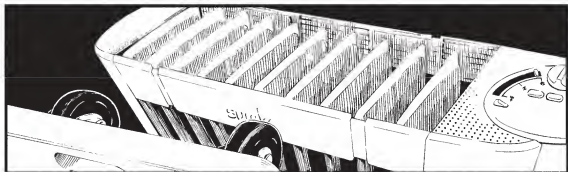
It  
almost felt  
like I was  
reaping  
what I'd  
sown.

I found  
myself  
getting  
locked up  
just that  
easily.

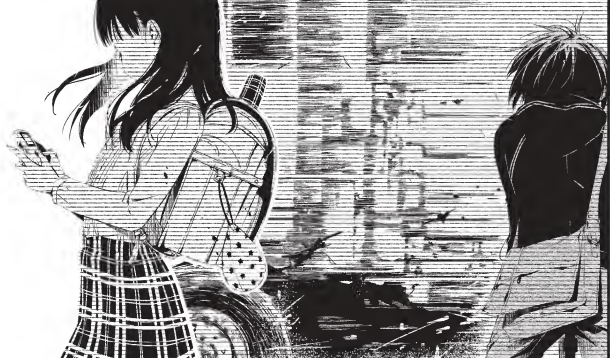
of imprisonment.

# 時間

○







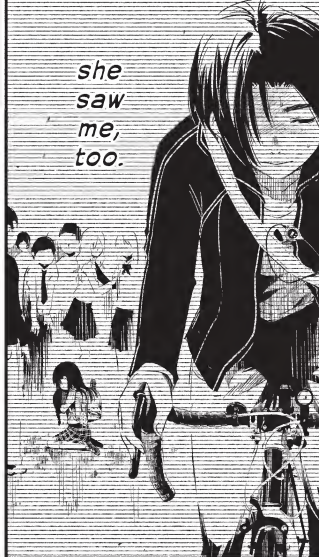
*when  
I saw*



*what  
U U  
did...*



*She had realized.*



*she  
saw  
me,  
too.*



*She  
knew I  
had seen  
her for  
who she  
really  
is.*



...  
Oh.



*...I  
guess  
that's  
what's  
happened  
here.*

*That's  
why she  
decided  
to silence  
me this  
way.*





*And  
she's  
desperate  
to  
cover  
up that  
part of  
herself*

*as  
she  
lives  
her  
life*

...

GRIP

*So  
she  
knows*

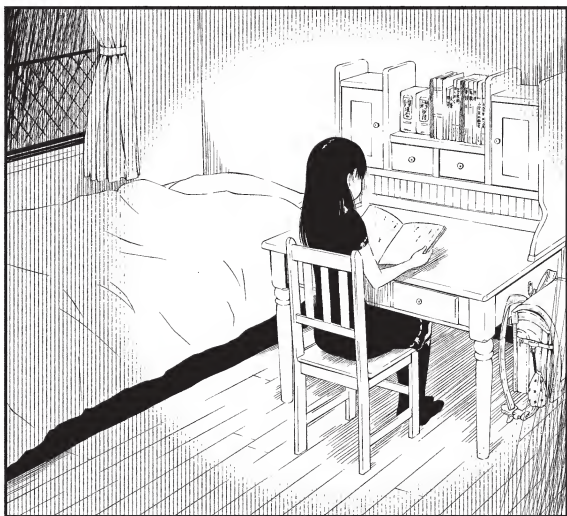
...



*Because  
you might  
tell them.*

*Tell  
them  
who I  
really  
am.*

*to the  
point where  
she feels  
the need  
to imprison  
anyone who  
witnesses  
it...*





SHKK



But ...

RUSTLE

it's  
almost  
certain  
that I can  
stage an  
escape.

As long  
as I  
have  
this  
thing,



The  
shallow  
thinking  
of a  
child...

This story  
isn't going to  
go like some  
piece of pulp  
fiction, or  
what is now  
known as a  
“light novel.”



It's  
fundamentally  
impossible  
for a grade  
schooler  
to kidnap  
someone.



a girl  
with a  
messed-  
up head.

U was  
by no  
means a  
beast,

nor was  
she a  
monster.

She  
was  
just



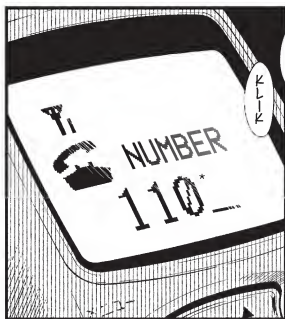


I used  
to be.

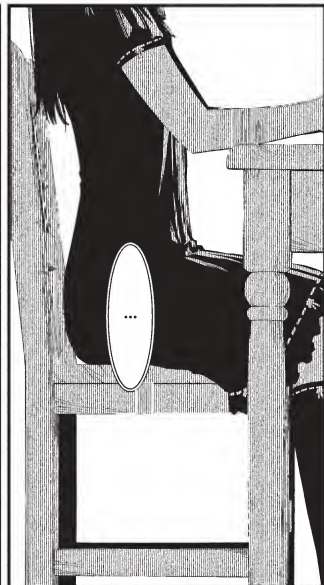
Just  
like

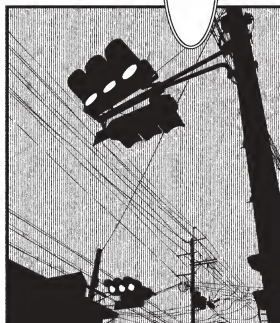
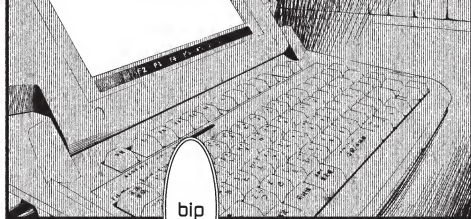
A child  
with a  
mind that  
invited  
pity.





\*110 (Police)

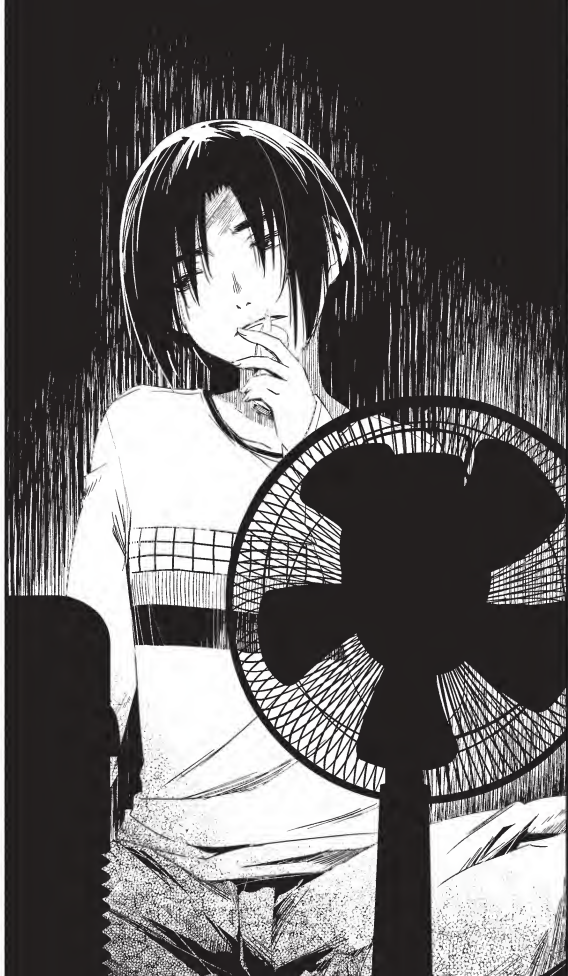




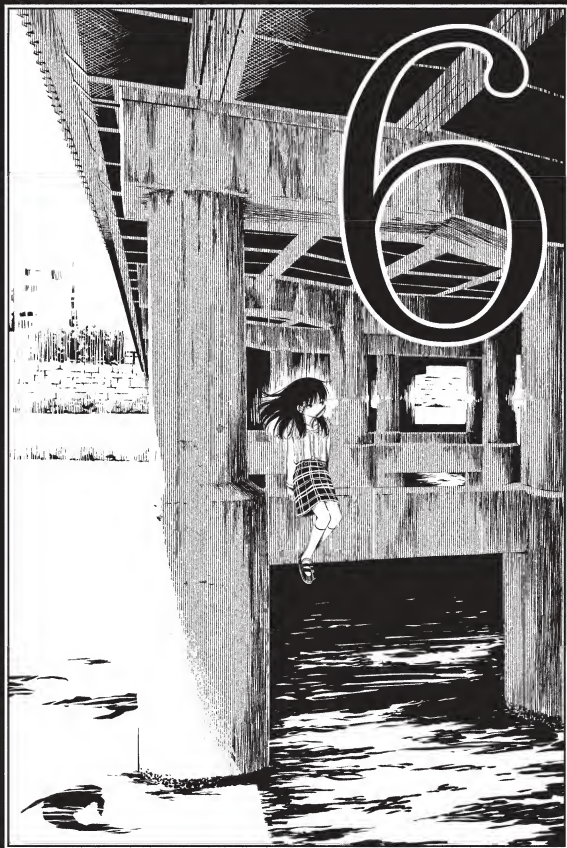


K  
L  
I  
K

CALL ENDED



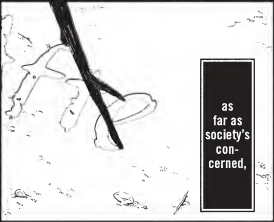




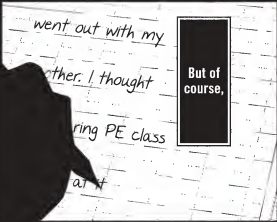


supposedly,  
you'll be  
allowed  
to behave  
however  
you want.

So long as  
you don't  
cause  
trouble to  
others,

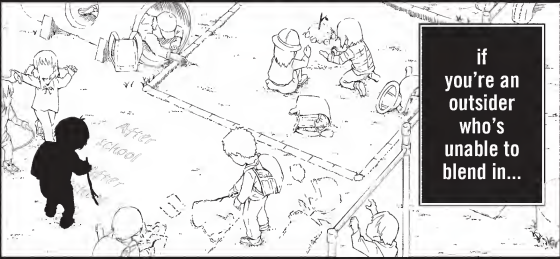


as  
far as  
society's  
con-  
cerned,



went out with my  
other. I thought  
ring PE class  
at it

But of  
course,



if  
you're an  
outsider  
who's  
unable to  
blend in...



some  
people  
consider  
that enough  
to count as  
“causing  
trouble.”

I'm  
constantly  
trying to  
show that I  
understand  
this fact,

so  
please,  
won't  
you please  
pardon me  
for that?



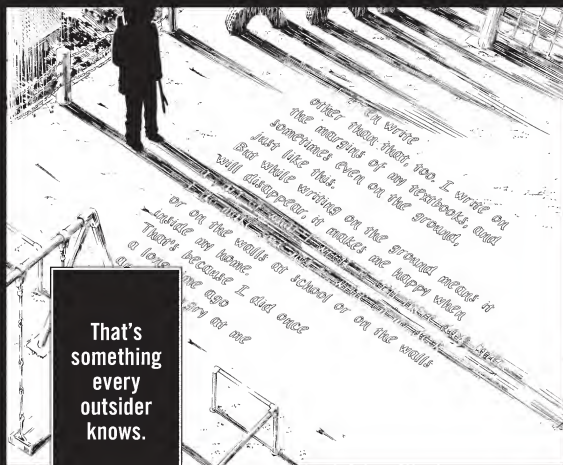
If I ever  
tried to  
blend in,

if I ever did  
something as  
overambitious  
as trying to  
get along with  
everyone...





I'd  
only end  
up causing  
even more  
trouble.



That's  
something  
every  
outsider  
knows.





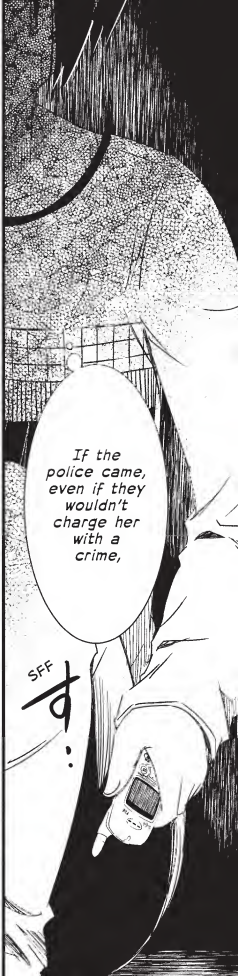


*This  
isn't  
the  
kind of  
thing  
you  
can  
laugh  
away,*

*so  
they'd  
have  
no  
choice  
...*

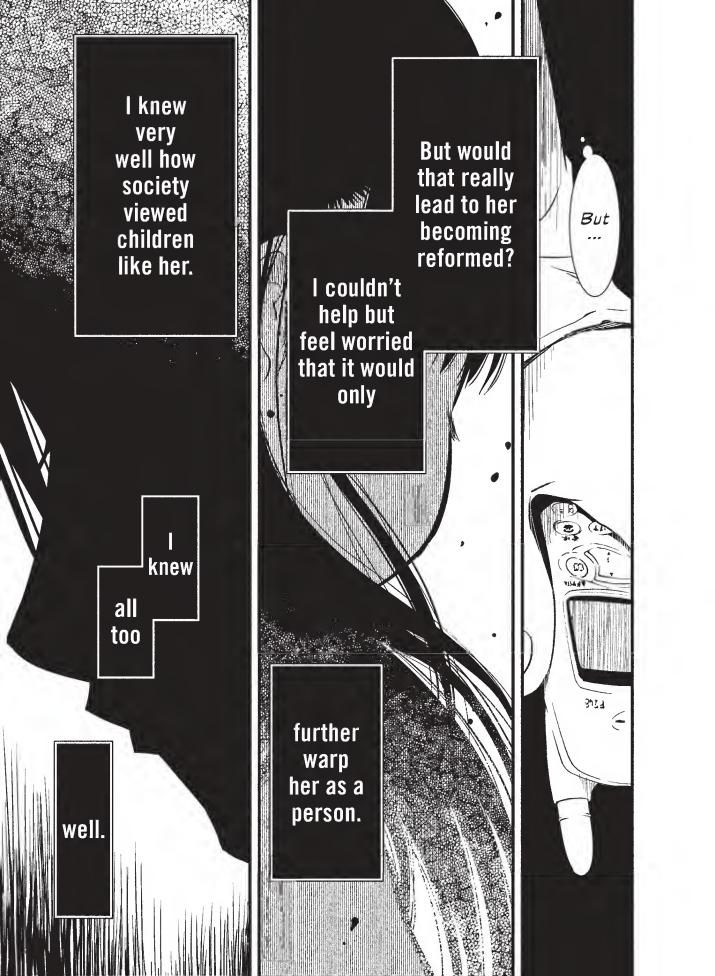
*she'll  
receive  
some kind  
of harsh  
punish-  
ment.*

*I'm  
sure*



*If the  
police came,  
even if they  
wouldn't  
charge her  
with a  
crime,*

SFF



I knew  
very  
well how  
society  
viewed  
children  
like her.

But would  
that really  
lead to her  
becoming  
reformed?

*But  
...*

I couldn't  
help but  
feel worried  
that it would  
only

I  
knew  
all  
too

well.

further  
warp  
her as a  
person.



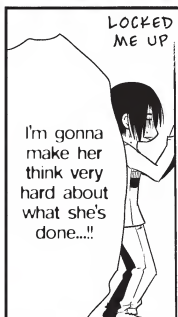
was  
aspiring to  
become an  
author back  
then.

Just  
as I

Really,  
the only  
option for  
a kid like  
her was to  
become a  
writer or  
something.

She  
wasn't a  
monster,

but  
there was  
a strong  
possibility  
that it  
would turn  
her into  
one...



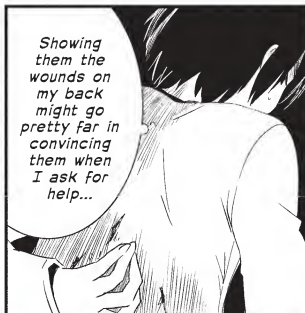
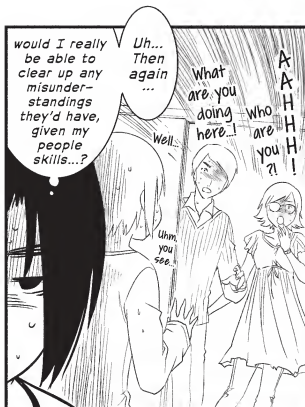


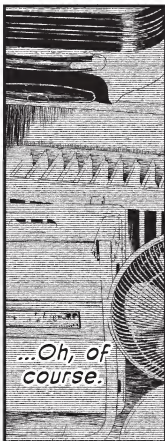


I might start to  
be known as the  
college student  
who got abducted  
by an  
elementary  
school  
kid.

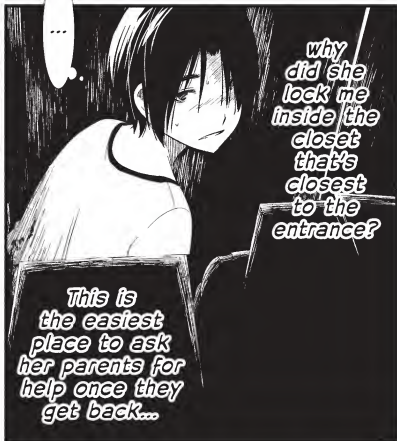






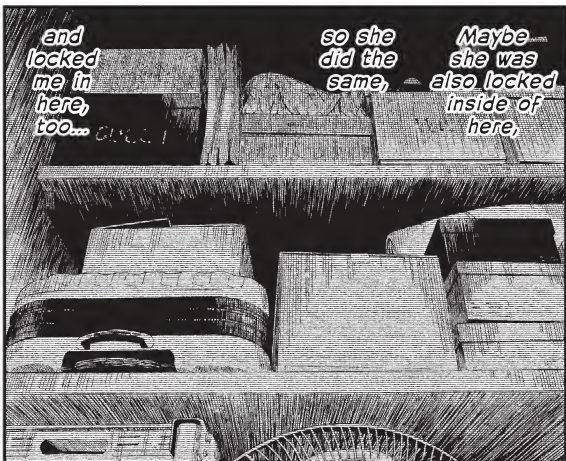


...Oh, of course.



why  
did she  
lock me  
inside the  
closet  
that's  
closest  
to the  
entrance?

This is  
the easiest  
place to ask  
her parents for  
help once they  
get back...



and  
locked  
me in  
here,  
too...

so she  
did the  
same,

Maybe  
she was  
also locked  
inside of  
here,



If I'm  
dealing with  
the kind  
of parents  
who aren't  
afraid to  
scold their  
daughter,  
there  
might  
be  
hope.

*Locking  
a child  
inside a  
closet  
is a  
classic  
method  
of  
punishment.*



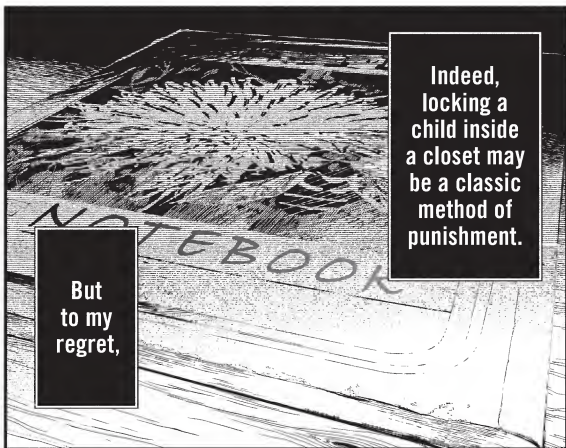
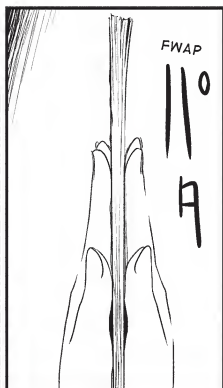
and kept  
me from  
realizing  
what I  
could've  
figured  
out

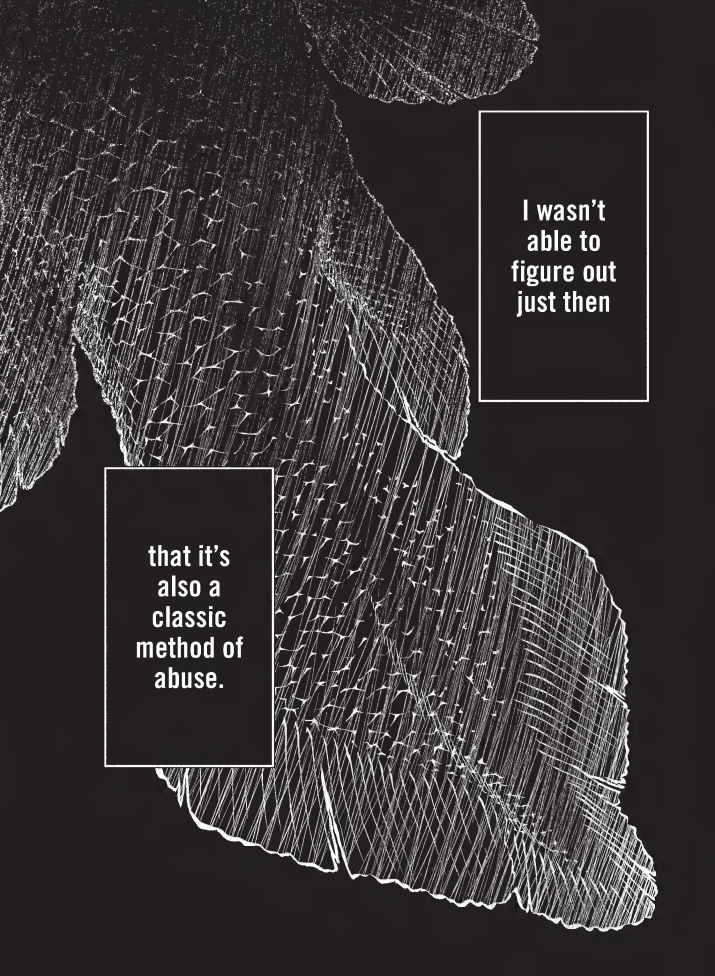
That  
slight  
hope  
placated  
me,

if I had  
followed  
that train  
of thought  
just a bit  
further.



If  
I just  
politely  
explain  
everything  
that  
happened,  
they  
should  
understand.



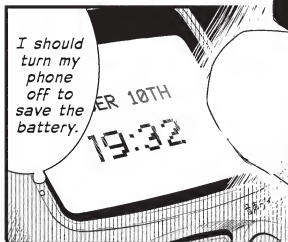
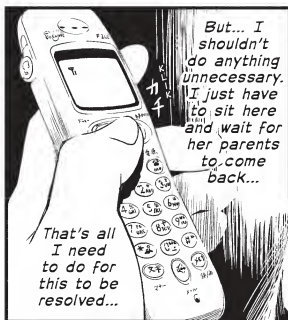


I wasn't  
able to  
figure out  
just then

that it's  
also a  
classic  
method of  
abuse.



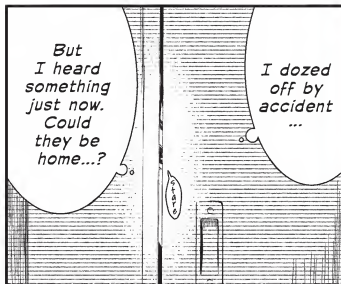


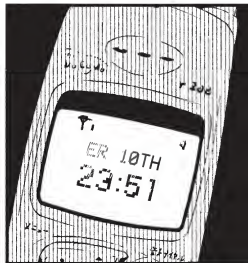
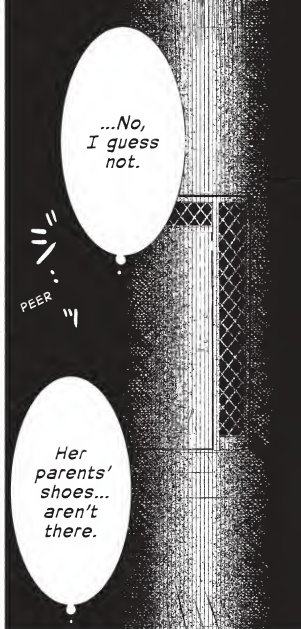
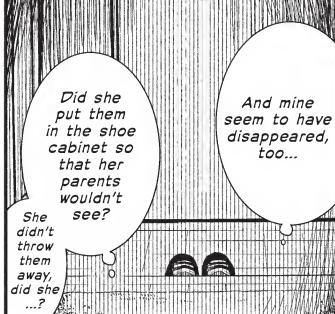




かた...  
KLATTER

THP  
と、と、と THP...





for  
four  
full  
hours  
In  
such a  
situation  
ooo!!

じゃあ...  
SWEAT

I was  
fast  
asleep

there's  
no sign that  
her parents  
have come  
home....!!!

...  
More  
importantly,

it's this  
late at  
night, and  
yet...

すう...  
SUSK...

One  
night  
...

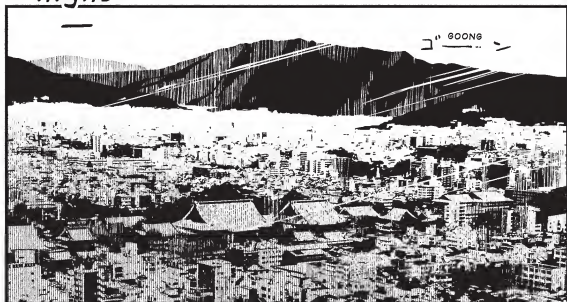
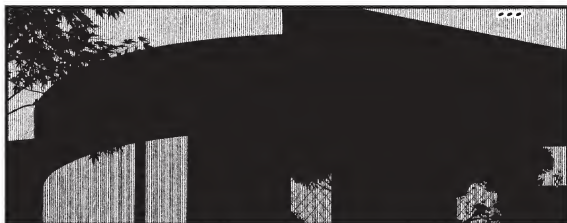
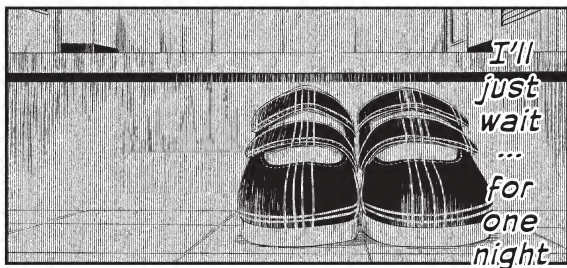
はあ...  
HAAH...

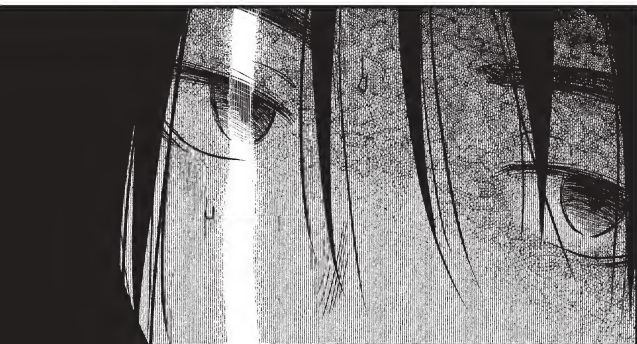
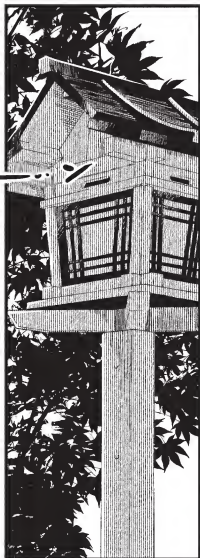
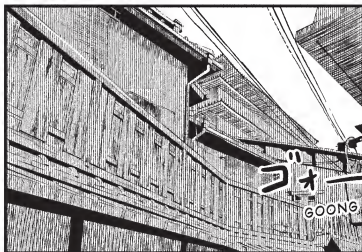
く  
る  
TURN

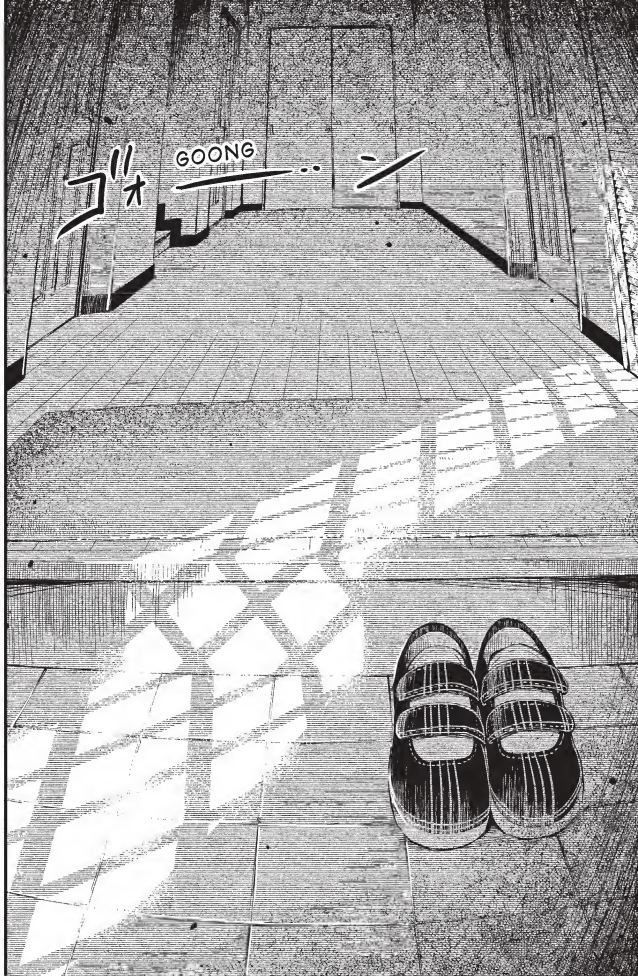
What  
should  
I do  
...?

すう...  
SFF



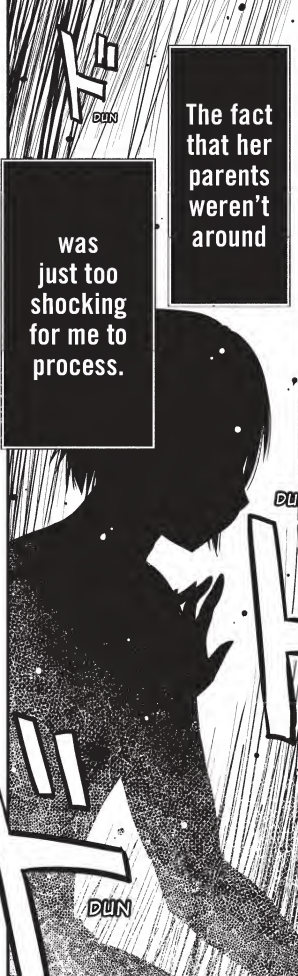












was  
just too  
shocking  
for me to  
process.

The fact  
that her  
parents  
weren't  
around



Completely  
unfounded,  
to boot.

It was a  
bizarre  
thought.



no  
mat-  
ter  
what,

If anything,  
there was  
evidence  
against it  
everywhere.

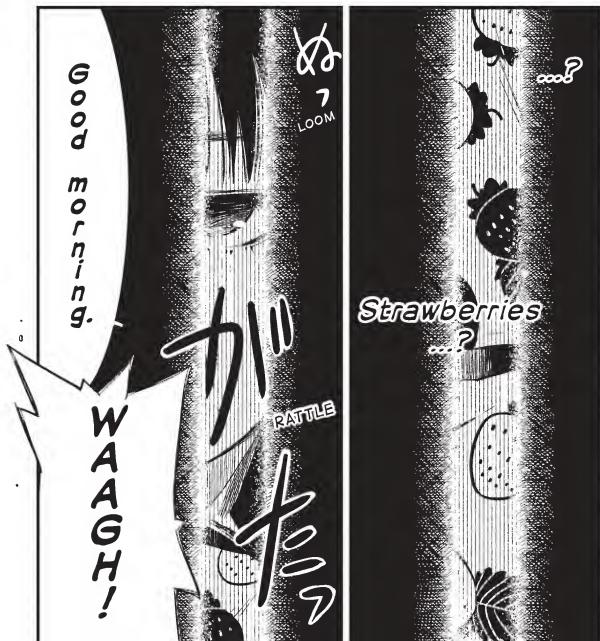
But  
...

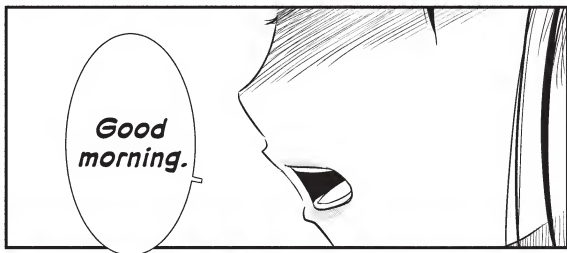


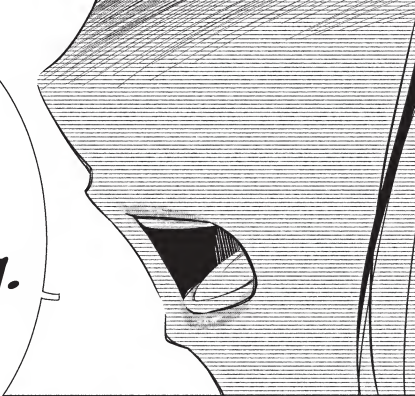
I couldn't  
stop my  
overactive  
imagination.











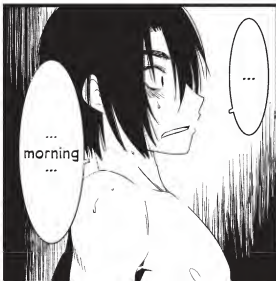
*Good morning.*



Good  
...

Uh...

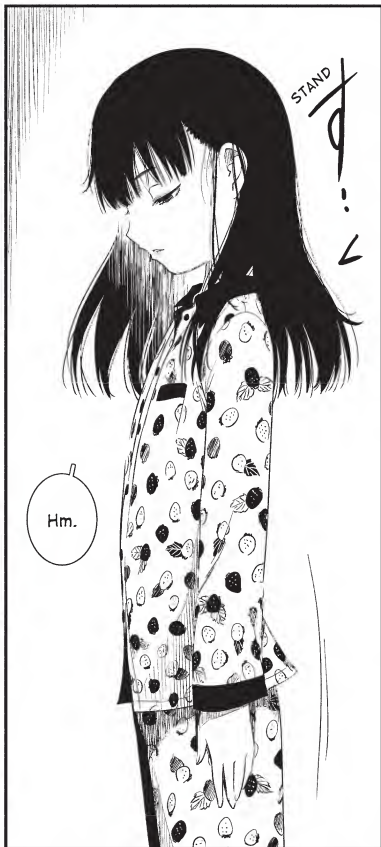
Ah  
...!



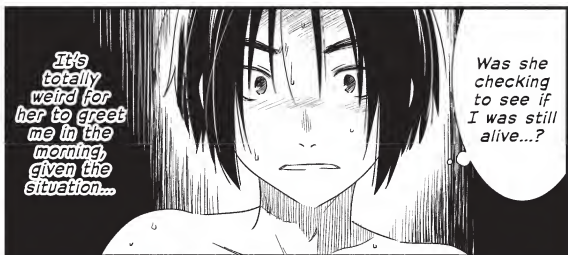
...  
morning  
...



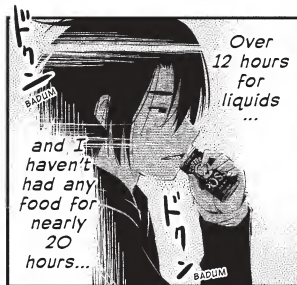
...

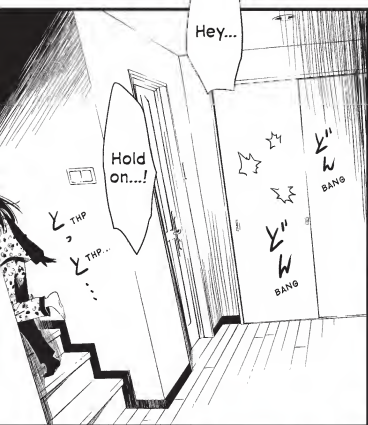








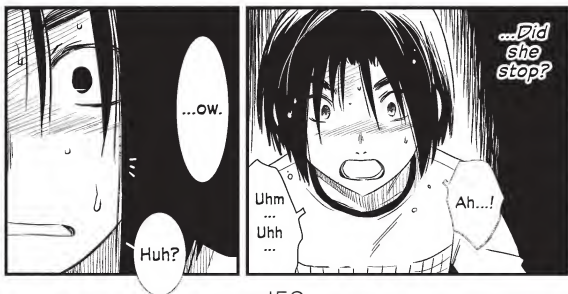




They say you  
sweat several  
cups of water  
just sleeping  
at night...

Couldn't it  
be easier  
to become  
dehydrated  
than you  
might  
think...?









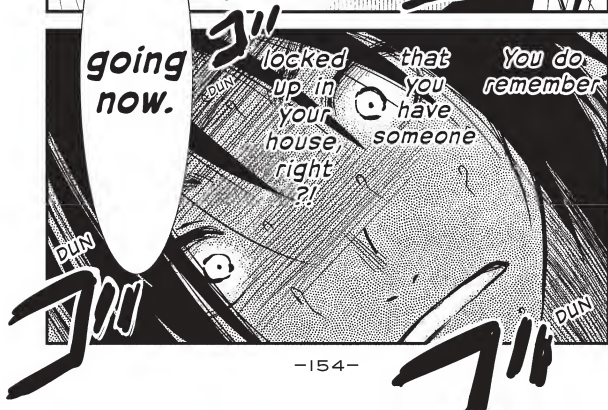
2014.11





*I'll  
be*

*going  
now.*





You  
can't  
...

So why  
are you  
going to  
school?

No!  
No you  
aren't!

Don't go  
anywhere

You'll  
be  
"going  
now"  
?



*I don't  
understand  
...!!*

*How is she  
able to go  
to school  
in such a  
situation  
...?*

STARE...

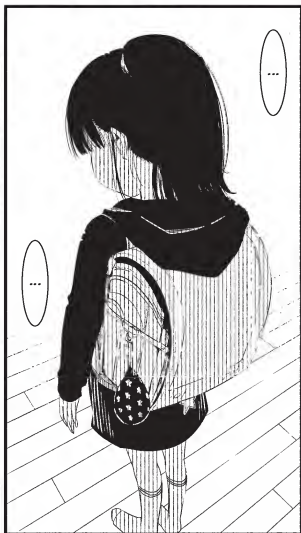
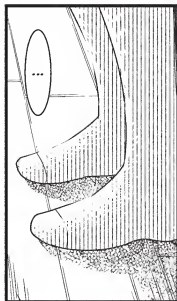
U"  
:

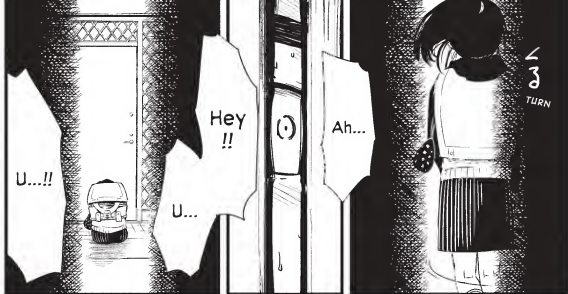
Please  
...  
Do  
you have  
something  
to eat  
?!  
Anything,  
please...!

I'm  
hungry  
right  
now...!

Wait  
...

Wait  
!









Think-  
ing

was  
start-  
ing to  
tire  
me  
out.

I still  
decided to  
hold out until  
I'd reached  
my limit.

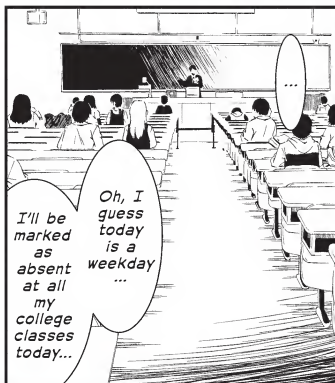
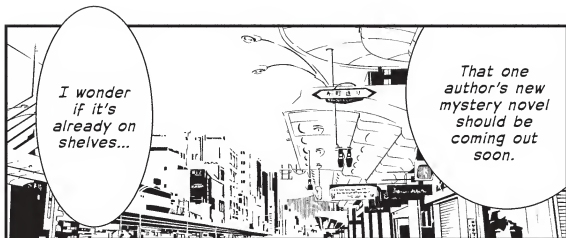
In a way,  
I may have  
only been  
pretending to  
think about the  
issue while in  
fact throwing  
it aside.

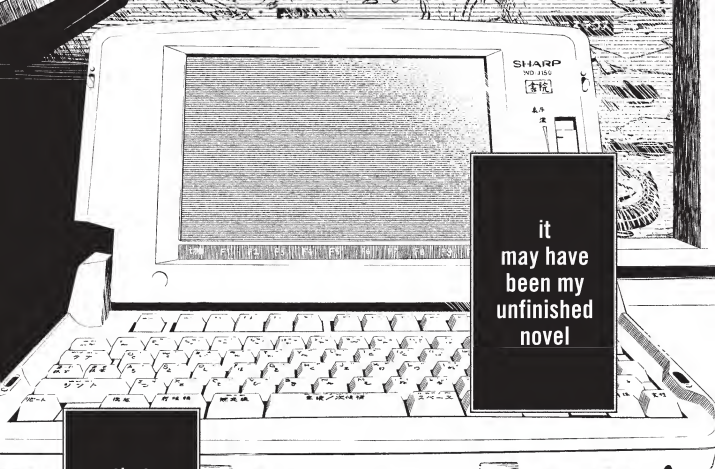
After  
deliber-  
ating,

Yes.

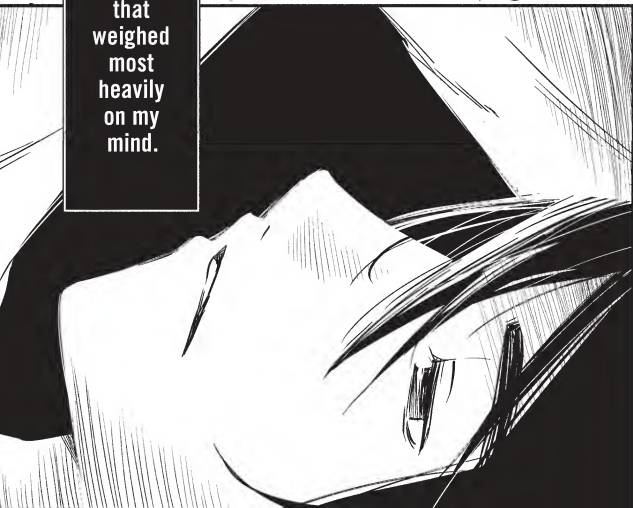






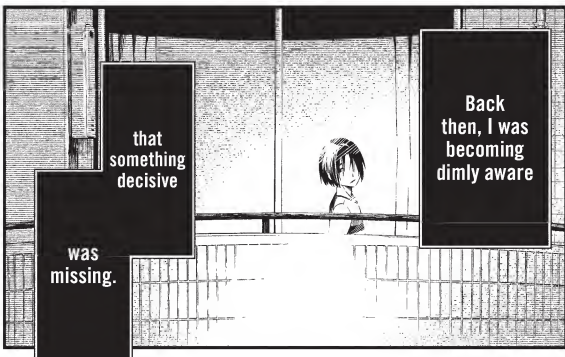
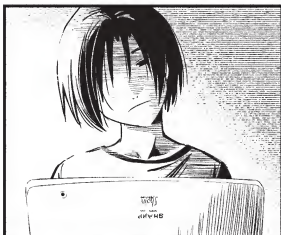


it  
may have  
been my  
unfinished  
novel

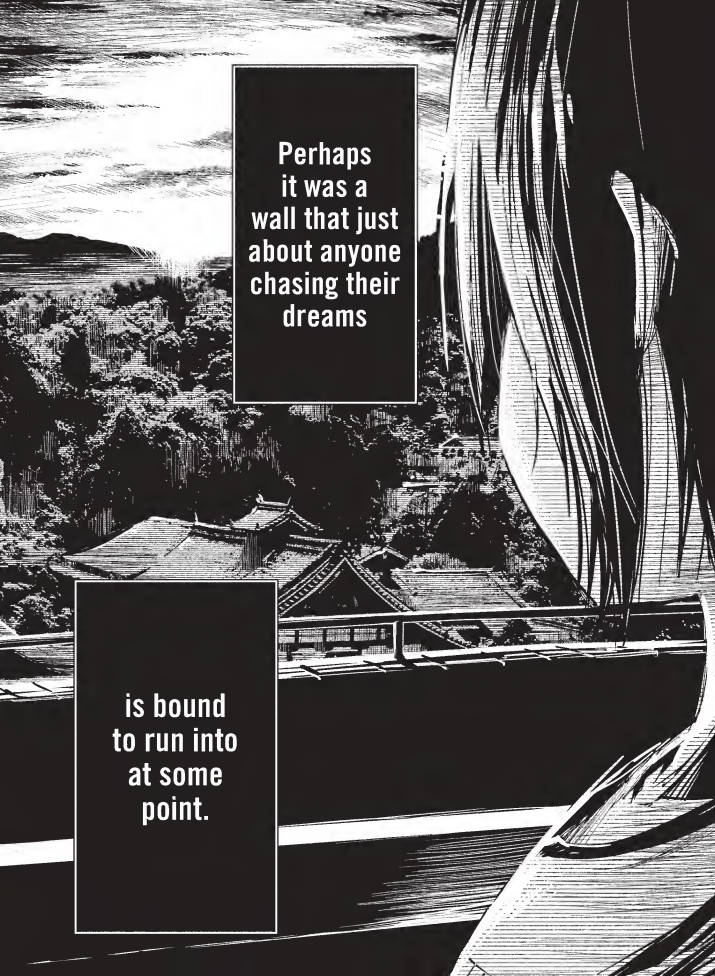


that  
weighed  
most  
heavily  
on my  
mind.



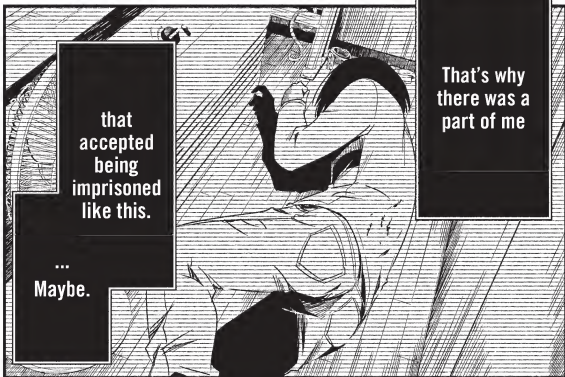






Perhaps  
it was a  
wall that just  
about anyone  
chasing their  
dreams

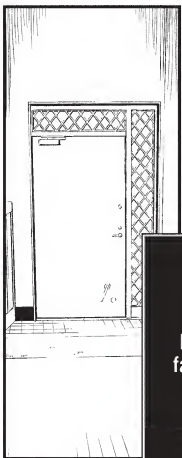
is bound  
to run into  
at some  
point.



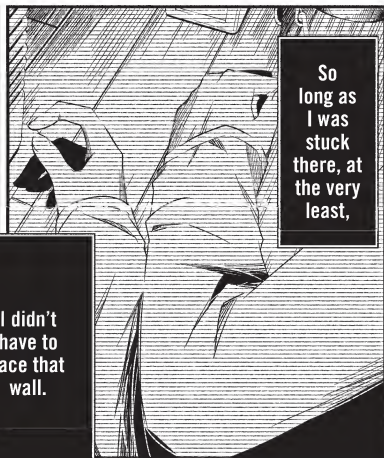
that  
accepted  
being  
imprisoned  
like this.

...  
Maybe.

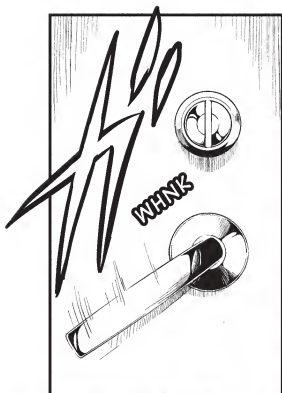
That's why  
there was a  
part of me



I didn't  
have to  
face that  
wall.

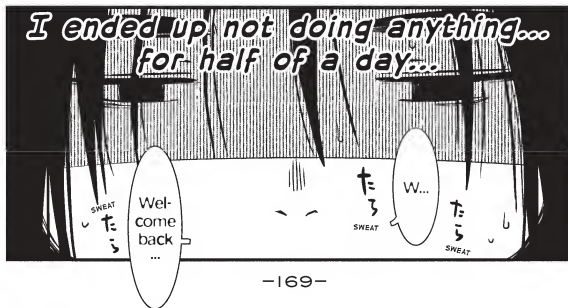


So  
long as  
I was  
stuck  
there, at  
the very  
least,



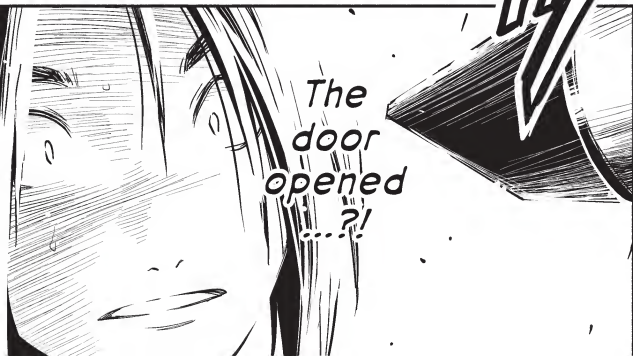


*I ended up not doing anything...  
for half of a day...*





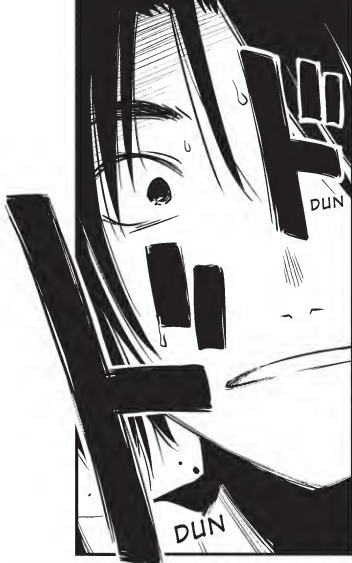


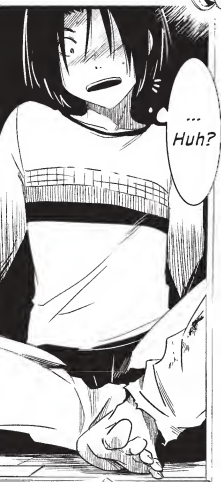




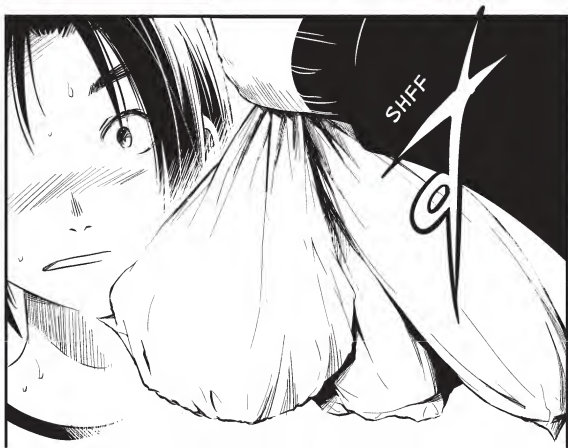
2015.6









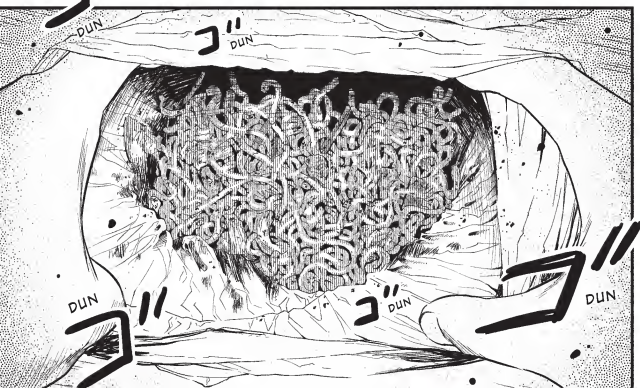








Food?









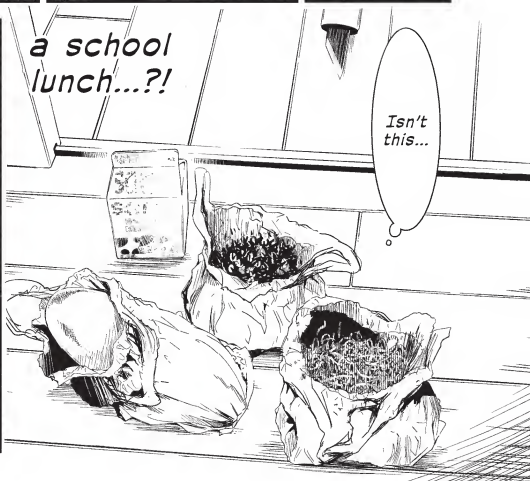
Here  
you  
are  
...

A  
drink.



So she  
brought  
this  
because  
of my  
request  
this  
morning  
...?

Should  
I be  
thanking  
her...?  
No,  
no, no  
way...



a school  
lunch...?!

Isn't  
this...



8

1111

1955

TREAS.

...

...

Aah...

9-

GRROWWWLL



SWAKK







B...

Before  
...



YOU ARE SUPPOSED  
TO GIVE THANKS!!

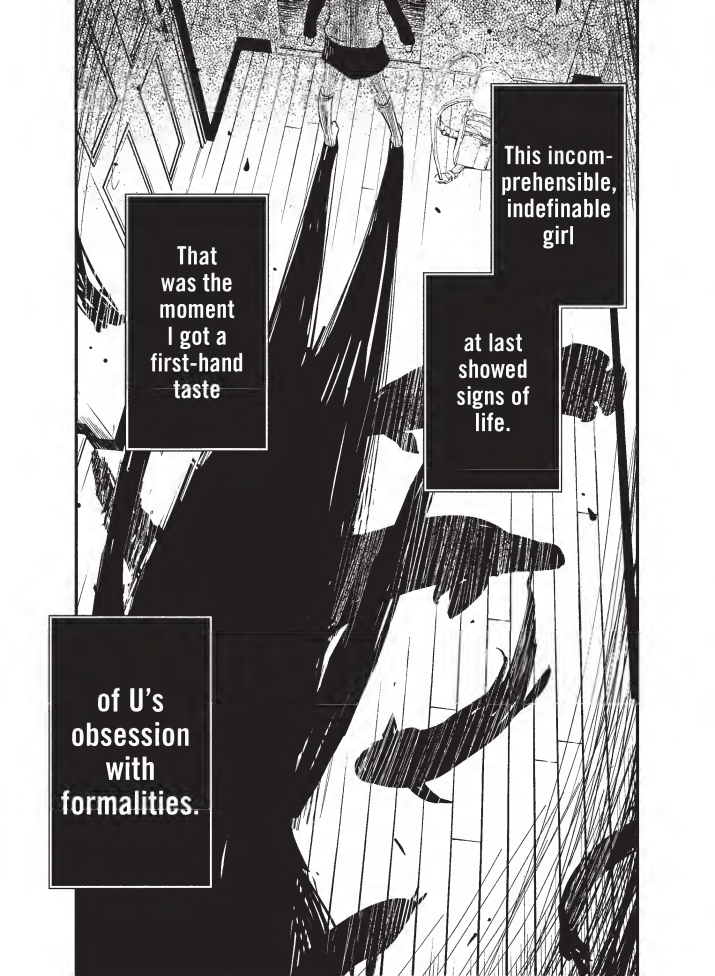
TREMBLE

I could  
barely  
tell if  
she was  
alive...

This grade  
school kid,  
whose  
presence  
was so  
dim

TREMBLE

TREMBLE



That  
was the  
moment  
I got a  
first-hand  
taste

This incom-  
prehensible,  
indefinable  
girl

at last  
showed  
signs of  
life.

of U's  
obsession  
with  
formalities.

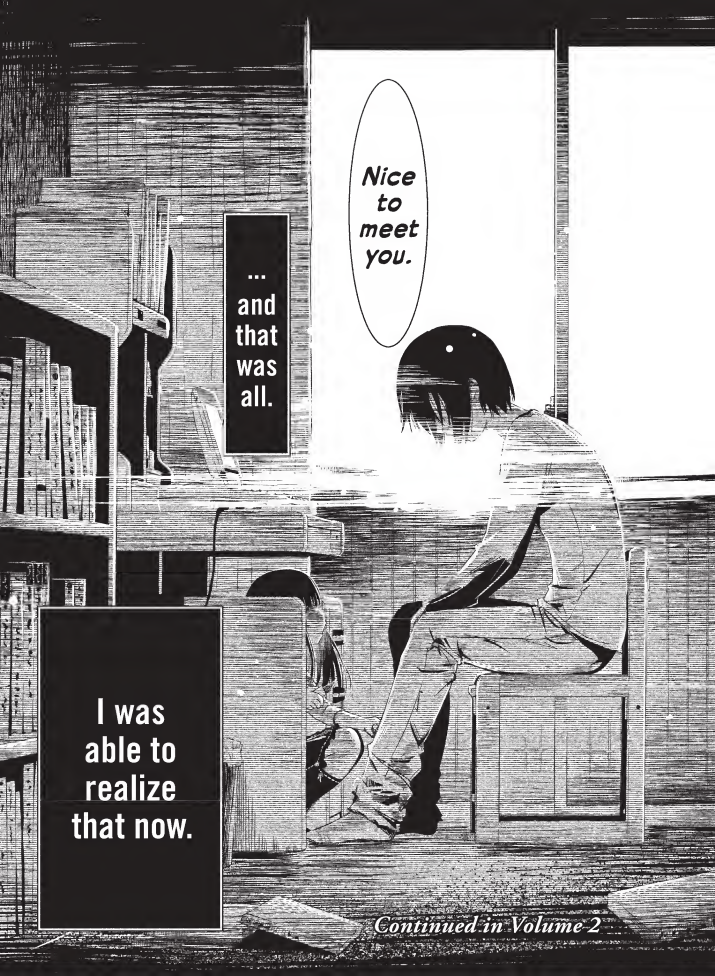


The first  
time U  
spoke  
to me,

she was  
so quiet I  
couldn't  
hear her.

It was  
simply:

She hadn't  
said  
anything  
frightening.



*Nice  
to  
meet  
you.*

...  
and  
that  
was  
all.

I was  
able to  
realize  
that now.

*Continued in Volume 2*





"My mom and dad are gone."

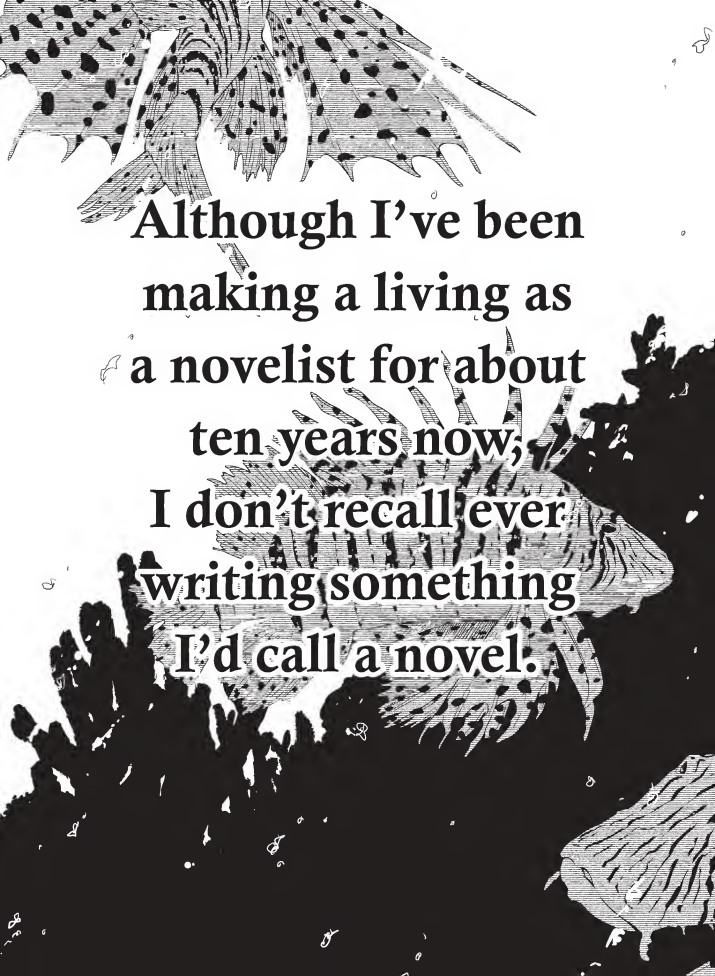
A messy living room,  
a dry sink, an empty refrigerator.

The young man escapes from the closet  
and learns the truth about U as their  
imperfect relationship begins to change.

# Imperfect Girl 2

Coming This Winter





**Although I've been  
making a living as  
a novelist for about  
ten years now,  
I don't recall ever  
writing something  
I'd call a novel.**

# **Imperfect Girl 1**

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